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NUMA'S VISION

AN ALLEGORY

"SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS"

BY

NICOLAI MIKALOWITCH

Author of "The Godhood of Man"

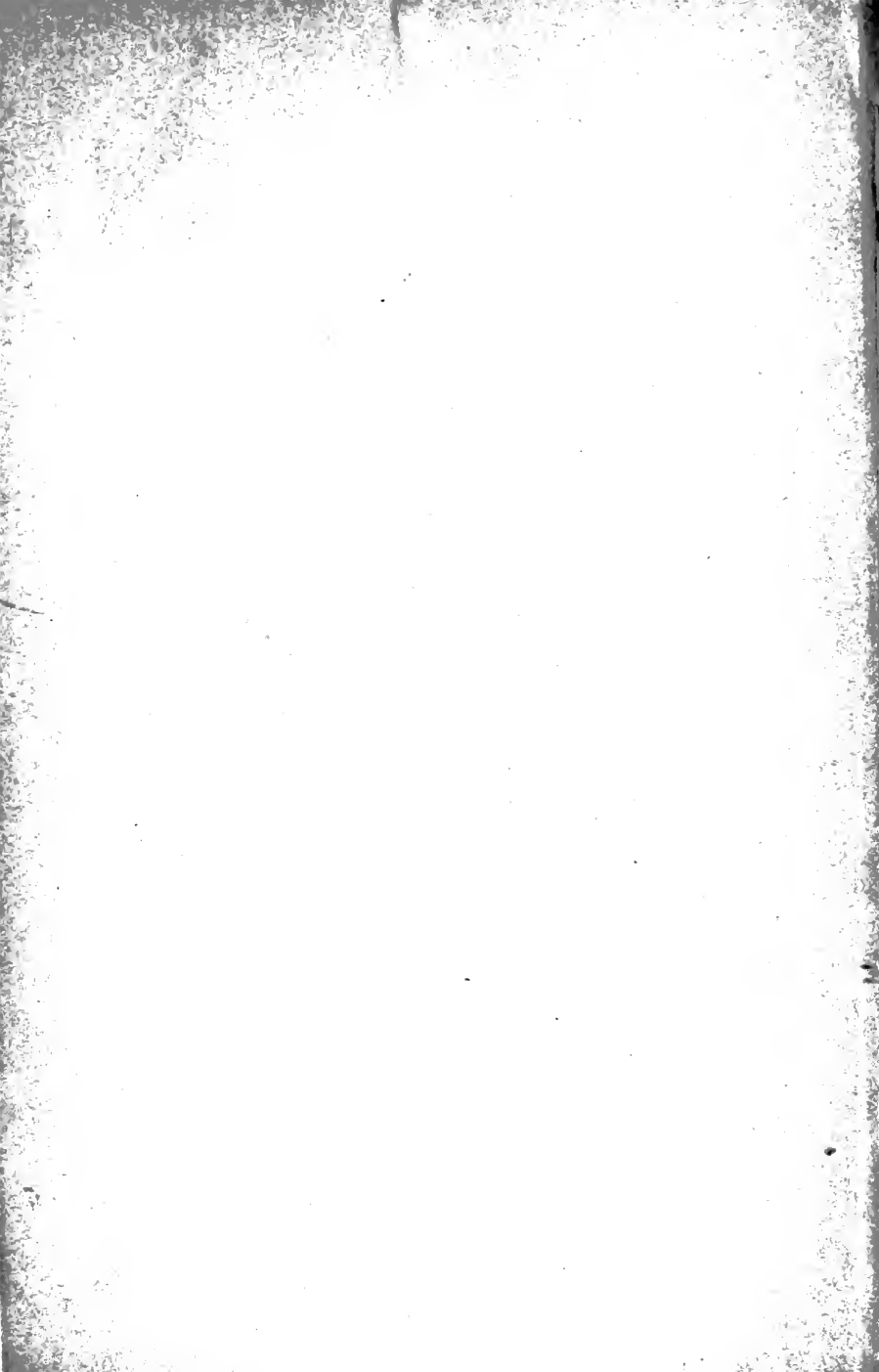


CHICAGO

NICHOLAS MICHELS

PUBLISHER







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By

NICHOLAS MICHELS
CHICAGO

TO THOSE OF MY COUNTRYMEN WHO
FAIL TO SEE THAT HISTORY WILL AL-
WAYS REPEAT ITSELF THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED . . .
WHERE IT ENDS, THE HISTORY OF THE
ROMAN REPUBLIC BEGINS

ERRATA.

Page 68—6th line from head, read “Junians”
in place of “Punians.”

Page 103—On last line read “He” in place
of “We.”



NUMA'S VISION.

I.

On a beautiful autumn morning, shortly after sunrise, two noble looking horsemen trotted their animals leisurely along the Via Ostiensis, toward Rome.

Although garments and bearing already distinguished the men as foreigners, their language in particular betrayed the polished Carthaginians they were.

Lazily the Tiber flowed in its bed, clusters of willows, which thickly lined the shore, partly concealing from view the muddy, yellow waters of the stream. In the distance the statue of Capitoline Jupiter was already becoming visible, while light mists ascended from the precincts of the city. Thus they pursued their way contentedly among the shady poplars.

The last mists vanished in the rays of the

autumnal sun, which just then seemed to hover above the Esquiline, as the men turned their horses toward the Porta Trigemina. In astonishment they gazed about, now upon the Aventine, on whose summit the temple of Diana reminded them quite vividly that unity ruled in Latium, and again contemplating the rustic villas hedged in by knotty oaks and pretty olive trees.

Already indications multiplied that the city was quite near. From surrounding country seats sounded the barking of dogs, whole flocks of chattering, clucking hens and geese noisily roamed among the nearby ponds and meadows, while from afar neighing horses seemed to challenge their own animals to return the greeting.

"Listen, Himilco," said one of the men, "methinks hard work awaits us here. After all, these Romans do not seem the barbarians that our merchants report them to be. Neither is this Tarquin to whom we go a fool, but will give us some hard nuts to crack, if I am not mistaken. It is beginning to dawn on me why he offers us friendship. Even now his colonies line the entire seacoast, and very

soon his merchantmen may dispute our dominion of the ocean.

"And if we do not proceed carefully the time will come when we shall be the under dog. Never in history have two mighty nations lived long side by side without destructive warfare. One thing, however, is clear to me. So long as we control the neighboring tribes and are able to sow distrust of Rome, just so long shall we be mistress of the seas. When once they become his allies he will soon subjugate and rule them, and then—we are lost. So I say, stick to the work, keep a clear head, and the game is ours."

His companion, a fine young fellow, nodded approval and replied:

"Aye, you may be right, Strabo. I, too, fail to treat the matter lightly the nearer we get to Rome. Should it ever come to war, we would find it difficult to attack their capital, while Roman men of war might easily drop anchor before Carthage. This friendly alliance which Tarquin proposes will mainly protect him against enemies, while we merely pull his chestnuts out of the fire and threaten his enemy's rear. I should hardly be sur-

prised if later on he and his allies—and that they will be if he whips them—would thrash us in unison.

“Blood is thicker than water, Strabo, and no matter how much they may now quarrel among themselves, let a foreign enemy appear and these Latins will all unite against him. That is my candid opinion. Just look at the country! A vigorous landed gentry surrounds the capital. And as you well know, this class, while peace prevails, lets the king tax the shirt from off its back; when war is once declared, it deals the enemy blow for blow. Thus it has ever been, and no one seems to know it better than this cunning rogue, Tarquin.

“What could our poor hirelings, who only serve the state for dirty gold, accomplish against a free citizen soldiery which defend their dearest possession? Here the free son fights for king, home and native land, while with us a venal senate buys the warriors, who only assist our rich snobs with their arms to pile up mountains of gold in foreign lands, and to cheat the Carthaginian people with false measure and shoddy merchandise.

"These plantations on both sides of the road bespeak a substantial prosperity. And the road itself made as if to last for ages and especially adapted for the speedy transport of warriors and provisions! Even the bulwarks at Ostia, the threatening walls of Terracina and Circeii indicate ambitious designs and a thorough knowledge of the art of defense. The people, too, seem superior to ours. Believe me, we have neither Lybians nor Sicilians to deal with this time. It will be a hard task to convince this king of theirs that we are destined to rule the seas, he to govern only his own land.

"Not to speak of their gods! So different from ours! One of our ships' crew told me but recently that the Romans never undertake anything without the consent of their supreme god, whom they call Jupiter. Such a people is hard to conquer, still harder to convince that we really are what we pretend to be—unselfish friends.

"One thing is firmly settled in my mind. Either our gods rule Rome one day, or Rome's Jupiter will enslave us. May this time never come, at least not till a distant future day!

"Curse it all, that one strong people is made to deceive another, merely to satisfy this unnatural greed for gold. Gladly I unsheath my sword in the service of the state, when it honestly maintains the rights of its citizens, or in brave defense of its boundaries against foreign invasion. But I despise this miserable pack of traders, upon whose demand we are now chased to the ends of the earth, Strabo.

"It is vile and damnable to devastate lands, murder nations, move boundaries by stealth and conclude treaties which one never expects to keep, and all in the interest of trade and commerce.

"And yet we praise our higher civilization! Fie, shame upon it! I tell you it made me sick to hear that fat blockhead, who graduated from the baker's trough to the senate, talk of the manifest destiny of Carthage and the wise providence of Hercules.

"The ruin of nations has made him wealthy, and since he wears fine clothes he also believes to have acquired brains, the unctuous hypocrite! Do you still believe that we are driven to war and death to promote the wel-

fare of the people? Not I. Since this pack of traders has become rich, truth, fidelity and justice have left Carthage. The people degenerate since the rich wallow in gold. And that is what we call a free republic!

"I dread the future, Strabo. Our history is written in blood, our gold bars are stolen, our culture is hollow—all is pretense. Methinks enough precious blood has been shed to sate the greed of our merchant princes. But they will never rest until the gods who avenge murdered nations raze our walls to the ground, burn our ships and forge the chains of slavery upon our posterity.

"I repeat it, Strabo, Carthage will one day atone for her many wrongs. Others have found their masters in us, we shall find ours here. Already Punic fidelity is synonymous with perfidy, Punic gold with traitor's hire.

"Then I say, let us turn back; I dread Rome and our fate!"

"For heaven's sake, Himilco, do not talk yourself into such ecstasy of rage. You are a dreamer, an idealist, who will never comprehend that our future greatness depends upon this very alliance with the Romans. The

dark-eyed girls of Carthage have petted you so much, until now your former warlike sense has vanished. Good; try your luck with them here in Rome, where your athletic form will make the women rave about you. That is really your field, noble Himilco, on which to pluck victories and laurel wreaths. Take your manly beauty to market and all womanhood will dance about you, ha, ha, ha! And while you vanquish Roman beauty, old Strabo, whom age has made virtuous, will hunt the king. We shall both conquer, for each is master in his own peculiar art—I in diplomacy, you as a skirt chaser, ha, ha, ha!

“Depend upon our good old luck, my dear Himilco. Our timeworn tricks have never failed us and we shall return home with a favorable treaty. Then let the haughty Roman spring his mines; the advantage will be ours. And that is all we are aiming at, is it not? Do you still believe in patriotism, truth and fidelity, little Himilco? Treaties are concluded that one may break them at his leisure. And as concerns our merchants and money changers, they have contrived the thing well. Do not, therefore, ruin our certain success with your school-bench wisdom.

"The main thing always is wealth and power. A few black souls more or less, what matters it? The earth, my son, is ruled by the victorious sword and—money, much money. When the tomfooleries of your youth disappear, this wise saying of mine will become obvious to you.

"First of all, let us have the treaty. Upon our return, we shall see to it that Tarquin has his hands full at home. A little stirring up beats everything. Whoever may then get the blows, rely upon it we will not suffer. Do we not always take the cream, while our neighbors kill each other? Rest assured, this time the laugh will be on the Romans. Then practice your arts, simulate friendship, and then sow enmity, which the faithful ally shall reap. That's the way we do it, little Himilco, ha, ha, ha!"

"Fie upon you, Strabo. No true warrior speaks as you do. Gold will ruin Carthage, as it has already stunted the people's intelligence and honor. Already we are so saturated with this poison, that all sense of justice has departed from us. Then go it merrily, simulate, steal, betray, murder, until it shall be our turn. Then we have earned our fate at

least honestly, proud rulers of the seas, miserable, treacherous pack of traders that we are!

"Your hand, Strabo, and depend on me! I shall follow your advice, and while you catch the hens with the rooster, I shall be content to conquer Roman beauty. But Carthage will surely perish, despite the Roman treaty."

They had meanwhile reached the gates of Rome.

The sound of a trumpet brought the guard to arms. Ambassadors desire to convey to our most gracious King Tarquinius the most humble greetings of the Carthaginian senate, the sentinel reported, and they were admitted within the gates. After the Centurio in command had examined their credentials and found them in order, they were allowed to proceed, accompanied by mounted guards.

The crafty Strabo, with tried skill, at once made the Centurio's acquaintance, lauding the straight, military bearing of the soldiers, and happy the king whom such men served.

"Aye," answered the Centurio, highly flattered. "Rome's warriors are brave, and our enemies know it, having felt their steel. Since

they respect the city, the best king endeavors to cultivate art and industry. Thus he promotes the general welfare of his subjects.

"May the greatest and best Jupiter reward what he has already done for Rome," he added with native simplicity, and rode ahead, leaving the ambassadors to their own reflections.

II.

Rapid progress marked their way along the southern incline of the Aventine, past the fountain of Egeria, which ripples in the sacred grove of the Muses, toward the Appian road.

Barely had the strangers time to contemplate the many temples and monuments which graced the hilltops and the public squares. In a rapid trot the Centurio led them past the Circus Maximus, behind which the temple of Janus leans against the Palatine, and where in the open square to the right stands the sacred fig tree of Romulus. Seen from here, the Tiber flows to the left, to the right hand rises mount Palatine with its sacred groves of oak, while before you appears the Capitol hill, crowned with the splendid temple of Jupiter.

The dull roar of animals from the ox mart was still ringing in their ears, though they had already arrived in the Forum Romanum, where the Centurio halted. Here a wonderful view presented itself to the luxurious Carthaginians.

High above them to the left, the heroic statue of Jupiter looked proudly down upon Rome. Just before them lay the senate house, adjoining it the hall of the people, while further north, where the Quirinal and the Capitol hills almost meet in narrow defile, the field of Mars begins, extending thence in majestic plain along the hillsides and ending with the river. On the opposite side their eyes followed the Via Sacra, which winds along the northern slope of the Palatine to the Esquiline hill, where the temple of Vesta peered from a shady grove. Adjacent to it lies the Regia, the palace of the Pontifices.

Along the hillsides, Patrician villas surrounded by well-kept gardens lay partly hidden behind clusters of stately trees, while on the hilltops sacred groves of giant oak protected the dwellings of the gods.

Even the wily Strabo scarcely suppressed an exclamation of delight, while Himilco, carried away by the mighty picture, held to his saddle like one in a trance. As if trying to finish a correct count of its hundred granite steps, his eyes hung on the grand stairway which leads to the Capitol, when a slap from Strabo's hand roused him from his dream.

"Wake up, my boy," he whispered, "and do not forget that you are an envoy of the republic of Carthage. See, they are coming to receive us in state."

Saying which, he pointed toward the Esquiline, whence came a troop of the king's bodyguard, preceded by a little chariot, in the direction of the Forum. Having reached the Urbian height, and avoiding the Cyprian alley, the cavalcade just turned toward the Via Sacra.

Not until then did Himilco become aware that the great place was rapidly filling with people, who, surging about in idle curiosity, stared in blank amazement at their foreign dress and sunburned faces. It was only with the greatest difficulty that the Centurio held back the gapers, some of whom had already come so near as to brush the fine garments of the foreigners.

An old, toothless woman caused general mirth by offering Strabo some young olives which she carried in a little basket.

"See, see," said Himilco, laughingly, "beauty greets wisdom and wishes you more flesh, Strabo. Help yourself; you need it

badly. Or can it be possible that the Roman fruitmongers are already raving over your cadaverous face?"

"Silence, Himilco, this is neither time nor place for such nonsense," Strabo replied, rather gruffly.

Meanwhile one bought soup greens, another bread, in the adjacent booths which lined the Forum, while butchers and fishmongers had all they could do to supply their callers' wants.

To the left of them a fight ensued from some unknown cause, which the Centurio suppressed with an oath, dragging the participants apart, who had by this time become an almost shapeless mass.

"Hey, there, you confounded Plebeians," he shouted at a curly-headed old fellow, who still sawed the air viciously with his long, lean arms, "get away from here and be careful to take your onion and garlic stench with you."

Saying this, he threw a bunch of green onions after him, which the old man had dropped and now hastily concealed in the folds of his Tunic.

"Look at the old good-for-nothing," some

of the nearest ones jeered the old fellow, as he tried his best to disappear in the crowd.

"His toothless Caia sends him to market, where he tarries, while she herself anxiously awaits his return in the Suburra, to join her in a mess of pottage."

"You idiot," piped another, "what do you know about pottage? Who in all the world but a crazy Sabinian takes onions and garlic to flavor it? His Caia has killed the goat because her milk supply has failed. Who bets that Cajus will offer Bona Dea the hindquarter of a wether, scented with onions and garlic, and do it with an honest face? He knows dead goats cannot talk. But the Pontifex in the goddess' temple loves to test his nose on such occasions. And he will tell the goddess that it was no wether, but goat meat which Cajus offered.

"Poor Cajus! The joke will cost you a sow udder and a bowl of wine."

This joke was greeted with universal laughter, in which the Centurio and the envoys joined.

Just then the curly head of the old fellow appeared again in the throng, striving to get at the joker, while he yelled:

"Wait, Kaeso, you dirty Tuscan vagabond; I'll teach you what it means to insult a Roman citizen."

Again the circle narrowed around the envoys, and ever more insistent and familiar became the mob. But the Centurio drove them back with the help of his guard.

"Let no one dare speak to the envoys until the noble Junius has welcomed them, you vagabonds and street loungers, or the Mamertine dungeons yonder may assist you in contemplating your misdeeds. And now march on and make yourselves scarce," he threatened.

"Hear, hear ye, Romans, how loud the Patrician dog barks since his bowlegs grace the king's horses!" someone shouted from the rear of the swaying throng.

"The noble Fabians, your clansmen, need your sword to cut beans with it," piped a little freak in a dirty Tunic.

"To hell with Brutus, the fool," another yelled, as if the strangers might, perchance, fail to hear it; "were he not an idiot, Tarquin would have sent him after his brother long ago. But since he is a simpleton he may live."

The Centurio was livid with rage as he listened to these insults and saw the nearest ones turn their grinning faces upon him, as if delighted at his discomfiture. But he swallowed the insults and only grasped his sword more firmly.

The clattering of horses was now heard, and all eyes turned in the direction of the Via Sacra, on which the king's bodyguard had just arrived at the edge of the Forum.

"Make way for the noble Junius; more room, ye citizens, to the Tribune of the bodyguard," the Centurio pleaded with the crowd, and in a twinkling the Forum was cleared.

And now came Junius riding through the center, like a circus clown proudly seated in his little chariot. After the manner of idiots he extended a friendly greeting to the hooting, sneering multitude.

The most noteworthy thing about his person was his legs, his knees, when seated, almost reaching to his chin. His large head, with the mighty brow, was neither disfigured by long, protruding ears, nor yet improved by a truly flat nose. Almost hidden beneath bushy eyebrows, his cunning, roaming eyes

seemed but to prove that not without reason had the people nicknamed him Brutus, the fool. Black like his eyes, sticky, uncombed tufts of hair fluttered about his forehead and behind his ears. As if for amusement, the long, thin fingers of his left hand continuously dug in the folds of his Toga Prætexta, shiny with accumulated dirt. In his right hand he fondled a light ivory rod, the badge of his high office.

Thus he advanced toward the envoys and with an awkward bow greeted them in the name of the king.

A look of contempt and a derisive smile was Strabo's only answer, while the youthful Himilco with difficulty suppressed a sudden fit of laughter.

As he contemplated the Tribune's appearance a second time, threatening lines appeared on Strabo's brow. He was led to believe that Tarquin had willfully prepared this mockery of reception, to signify to the republic of Carthage his inexpressible contempt. However, expert that he was in all the arts of diplomacy, he cleverly concealed his wounded pride, and instead of insulting retort handed Junius the

credentials of the senate, saying with dignity:

"The great and mighty Tarquin, king of Rome, following the custom of civilized nations, conveyed to our senate his greeting, and has offered us his distinguished friendship. Pursuant to his wish we are here to conclude the terms of a treaty in the interest of both nations, the mightiest of the earth. Therefore take us to the king, that we may greet him."

Junius, instead of listening, had meanwhile unrolled the parchment and began reading it in schoolboy fashion, following the lines with his little rod.

Fixing his eyes anew upon the envoys, he slowly replied:

"I have the order to receive two Carthaginians named Himilco and Strabo, and to make them my guests until Tarquinius, my uncle, the king, I mean, may desire to receive them.

"You, old fox, must be Strabo," he continued, tickling the old fellow's ribs with his rod, whereat Himilco laughed aloud.

"Now you see, Strabo, I know my man every time. I am not as foolish as I look, hi, hi, hi.

"And you, my pretty boy, are Himilco, as it reads in the parchment. The citizens had better keep their grown daughters under lock and key while you are with us. You might conclude too many entangling alliances, somewhat in the same fashion as our Æneas did when he was Dido's guest. My father, when he was still alive, often told me how easily your queen caught fire, hi, hi, hi.

"My name is Lucius Junius, and I am called Brutus, because I am such a fool, the people say. And I guess they are right. You may also call me so, because I like it that way.

"Well, well, well; so you are from Carthage! Tarquinius, the king, my uncle, I meant to say, has already told me lots about you. 'Brutus,' he said—you see, he calls me Brutus, too—'these Carthaginians are foxy guys—and rich—very rich—and I may be able to use them one day,' he said. 'But don't you let them nose about too much while they are in Rome. That's why I do you the honor of entertaining them at your house,' said he. 'To you alone of all the Patricians have I intrusted my own person. The envoys shall have the same protection. You are an honest fool,'

he said, 'and see to it that no harm befalls them, and that they take nothing along when they leave. And don't you let them come in contact with my enemies, the Patricians.' That's what he said.

"And now I vouch you like Rome already. But I will show you everything, and you shall be satisfied with me, for I am really not as foolish as I look.

"I like the ox mart below there best. Tarquinius, my uncle, the king, I mean, says because I am an ox myself is why I like it so, hi, hi, hi! And he must know, because he knows everything.

"The big ditch, or Cloaca Maxima, as we æsthetic Romans love to call it, is also very nice to see; but that is underground and one cannot see it any more, except where it isn't finished yet. I must tell you about that, too.

"You see, Tarquinius, the king, my uncle, I meant to say, wanted to make a ship canal out of it at first, and he had already spent lots of public money on that idea, when one day there comes to Rome one of those Greek dude architects, and he says to him:

" 'Tarquinius,' says he, 'you may be a very

smart king, but you know nothing at all about canals.' That's what he told him.

"And then Tarquinius, my uncle, the king, I mean, let a loaded hay wagon go through and saw that a ship could not go through.

" 'Brutus,' said he, 'Rome is growing more and more, and we must not let the dirt accumulate, or it may spoil the water and make the Romans sick—or take to wine,' he said. 'I want to beautify the city,' said he.

"Presto, change, and the ship canal is a big sewer, through which no ship can go, and because it smelled so strong near it, he had it walled over. Down there, near the Tiber, they are still working at it. They put in stones as big as a house in the Suburra.

"I shall also take you to the senate house, where the senators meet when they have nothing else to do. By the way, how many senators do you have in Carthage?"

"A hundred," Strabo replied, gruffly, wondering when the idiot would stop bothering them with his foolish talk.

"Then you have as many as we have left here. We had three hundred of them, but my uncle, the king, I mean, thought that too

many. So he killed the others, because they were superfluous, I believe.

"Do you behead senators in Carthage, too? Oh, I forget that you have no king. But come with me now; the journey must have tired you. Rest up first and then inspect my garden till the noonday meal is done. Tomorrow you shall see the king if he returns from Ardea to-day, as expected."

The sun stood above the Palatine when Brutus re-entered his little chariot, telling the guard to proceed. Amid the jeers and shouts of the rabble the procession moved in the direction of the Junian villa on the Urbian height of the Esquiline, not far from the king's palace.

For the first time since they had entered the gates of Rome even Strabo's face relaxed sufficiently to produce a healthy laugh. The situation was so droll, in fact, that even the most serious was bound to enjoy at a glance its comical features. But the Tribune's stolidity could not be disturbed. If some one of the crowd shouted: "Brutus, you blockhead!" Or another, "Brutus, get your ears clipped!" he would turn around amiably and smile in a

most idiotic manner. But while he seemed to be indifferent to his surroundings, the body-guard presented the appearance of men true to military precision and discipline.

But that which Strabo above all other things failed to comprehend was, that Tarquin, with his choice among the Roman nobles, should have selected this very man as Tribune of his guard. Either the king's fame was overrated abroad, or else Brutus was not what he seemed.

At all events, the wily Punian scented a secret, the veil of which he hoped to penetrate. It was out of question that Tarquin had meant the reception as an insult, since Brutus held the highest office in the state, the duties of which he apparently performed with marked fidelity, despite his acknowledged stupidity.

And yet his speech had not been conducive to increase the Punian's faith in Tarquin. On the contrary, Brutus had but fully awakened Strabo's distrust.

Unable, thus, to reconcile the contrasts which the situation presented, he merely shook his head for an answer, leaving it to his cunning and to accident to solve the apparent riddle.

III.

Plane trees of majestic growth surrounded the house of Brutus, which they now entered. Supported by stately columns, a portico shaded its entire front, which, following the style of Roman villas, was extremely long, and thus easily led to the conclusion that the master of the house was a Patrician. The whole of it breathed a stately simplicity, solidity without pomp. A wooden tablet on the door bore the legend: "Cave Canem;" while at the threshold the venerable "Salve" greeted them.

The obliging slave in the Vestibulum relieved them of their cloaks and opened the door leading to the Atrium, whither another slave, coming from the Impluvium, already bore three chairs. Smilingly they observed his caution to step in right foot first. Invited by the Tribune, they seated themselves.

Along the walls in hewn niches rested the ancestral statues of the Junians, near them the statues of the household gods. One

empty niche attracted the attention of the guests especially.

The Tribune smiled bitterly as he noticed Strabo's glance, who merely asked :

"Brutus, methinks there is but one more niche to receive the statue of the last Junian."

"Oh, no," calmly replied Brutus, and his face turned hard and rigid, "my brother was one of the two hundred senators that were superfluous, and—" but his voice failed him and he turned away to conceal from his guests the unhappy history of his house.

After a while he continued more composed :

"Nor am I the last Junian while two sons, in the prime of youth, encourage the father's hope that the name may long continue to shine in the annals of Rome. May the greatest and best Jupiter grant it!"

However, his sudden agitation had not escaped Strabo, who knew enough to build the most extensive plans upon the discovery, and decided on the spot to draw the secret from him at the first opportunity.

Perhaps great advantage might be gained for Carthage! And her weal was always nearest to his heart, no matter at what cost to oth-

ers. Perhaps the lever of diplomacy would first have to be inserted here, would he destroy Rome's threatening power. And that was his main object, after all! To obtain this, he was prepared to simulate friendship, which to him at best was but a cloak to conceal the real designs of his government, always ready to be thrown off at the most propitious time. And the money which could be saved that way; that, too, made it worth his trouble. Why should he squander it upon venal souls on his return, when all signs prophesied that here the same result might be attained without its use? However, Rome must be destroyed, no matter what the means employed, nor what the cost to Carthage.

This Brutus, for instance, might be used to good advantage, even though he was an idiot. And if he was not an idiot, so much the better. Hate slumbers in every being, and how Brutus must hate him, that slew his brother. Whatever Tarquin's reason for the cruel act, Brutus would never forget, much less forgive. Thus Strabo reasoned and now awaited but the time when he should prove the truth of his conclusions.

Brutus had meanwhile relapsed into his former state of indifference and apparently busied himself with the slaves, who at his command hurried in all directions. Not a muscle twitched when he at last asked the men to follow the waiting slave to their room, in the central portion of the house, to the right of the Impluvium. He accompanied them to the door and wished them happy days under the roof of the Junians.

Being alone, he retraced his steps to the Atrium, where he stood long and silently before the empty niche. Then raising his hands in fervent supplication, he prayed:

"Great, almighty Jupiter, guide of the earth and the heavens, ruler and protector of Rome.

"Look down upon thy servant Brutus and grant my earnest prayer. One hundred milk white bulls will I gladly sacrifice to thee, wilt thou help me free the state of its tyrant.

"I thank thee that in thy wise providence thou hast thus far preserved my life. Preserve it, O Jupiter, until my eyes shall have seen the day of liberation. Strengthen my soul with thy almighty power, arm my hand with thy destructive fire! I demand vengeance

for the blood of my brother, the restoration of our ancient privileges, the liberty of the Roman people and the abolition of all tyranny.

"Make me, O Jupiter, thy instrument, to avenge the shame which Tarquin hath brought upon Rome!

"Enlighten the minds of the strangers whom thou hast led into my house, and soften their hearts so I may gain them for my holy cause!

"When thou hast done this, greatest and best Jupiter, a few bulls more or less shall be of no consequence!"

Then turning to the other side, he added: "And thou, too, divine Juno, mother of the gods, shalt not fare badly. Fifty of the nicest sow udders will I sacrifice on thy altar, and as many Amphoræ of my choicest wine, if thou wilt intercede for me and promote my undertaking!"

The gods alone knew how often Brutus had pleaded in this manner. None of his household had ever heard these supplications, not even the noblest of Roman mothers, when she still carried the keys and reared his children. She, at least, had died a natural death.

Amid many tears he had entombed her in the most beautiful part of his garden. Since she was no more, but one idea had taken full possession of his soul—the liberation of Rome from kingly tyranny and the restoration of the old Patrician order.

The guests had meanwhile changed their dress and were already beginning to feel quite at home.

"See, Strabo," Himilco said, after he had arranged the last folds of his cloak, "what an outlook presents itself here! From this window you may view the whole city, while yonder the eye rests on the king's castle. It all seems as if made to order for our host in his position.

"By the downward pointing arms of Moloch, if I don't believe that this Brutus is smarter than he looks! And how the fragrance of the garden fills the air! That's what I call hospitality. We did not fare nearly as well in Syracuse, not to speak of Messina, where they lodged us near the chicken coop. Do you still remember that antiquated goat which bleated lustily whenever she discovered a blade of grass? Then the whole goat family would bleat. In faith, I believe our mission really

failed because of their eternal bleating, and because of your professional jealousy, Strabo. You diplomats are always bleating, without meaning what you say. And if you find one blade of grass, well, then you declare war and let the people bleat till they beat each other sore. You, of course, eat the blade of grass, while the dead peasant becomes a hero, and the live one chews his fingernails. As for me, well, I still see the long-necked rooster stick his head with the heavy red crest through the fence each morning, crowing at me as if I, too, poor sucker, was a member of the chicken family.

"Here, however, I am more than pleased. And I hope that the embassy may be prolonged. What do you think of it, old diplomat, with the dust of half the world in your mantle?

"Well, speak up, and do not act as if you carried Hercules' burden on your shoulders, which are not intended for such mighty work. These never-ending calculations, combinations, cogitations have prematurely turned your hair. Come here and see the temple in which Rome's fate is determined by a wholly unknown god."

"Oh, quit your idle nonsense, Himilco. Matters of more importance engage me here, and henceforth I shall resent these clownish remarks of yours about my person. If an unkind god has favored me with an unsightly body, you should at least admire the master mind in this gray head of mine. At all events, respect in me the senator.

"I am almost led to believe that you left eyes and ears aboard ship, where the curly headed pilot's wife occupied your entire time. When will the mysteries of diplomacy find ready entrance into that head of yours? Of course, since they tell you that you are descended in direct line of Dido, you actually believe to be above a knowledge of this science. No one has ever told you your paternal ancestor's name, because no one knows. Dido was not very particular in matters of such importance. However, I think it about time that you become a useful member of the republic and forget the pranks which now fill your head.

"What do you think of Brutus, for instance, or have you as yet formed no opinion of him?"

"Why think so much on that score, Strabo? Brutus says himself he is a fool. That's what I think, too. Why should he otherwise proclaim it so freely? Or, do you really fancy to lift the earth from off its pivot with your everlasting subtlety. Thus, if Brutus is not a blockhead, then nature has been unkind to his face, which neither of us believes, and he least of all, because he has to wear it. Now that you have my opinion of him, be content with it.

"What do I care for your detestable diplomacy, which is really nothing else than continuous meditation how to dig another's grave, then make believe he dug it, and therefore no one but himself is to blame for his misfortune.

"And then your simulating condolence, your assurance of false friendship, the sowing of brotherly dissension with its one deliberate aim—another's misfortune, homicide, more power.

"You diplomats are nothing but assassins. And after you succeed, a thanksgiving proclamation is issued by the senate, commanding the people to offer sacrifices to the gods, who

were so kind to help the country to its barbarous victory. The diplomat who mixed the broth, besides a crown of laurel, receives much money to reward his deceitful nature. The gods, in their inscrutable wisdom, have made him their instrument to torture the enemy, destroy his possessions and rob his gold.

"Then let the poor wife in her desolate home cry in vain for the husband killed in battle, starving children for their father, virgins sell their body for a crust of bread, sons in despair may come to be thieves and robbers, to be nailed to the cross! What matters it, if the statesman acquires the enemy's gold? The gods have again manifested their goodness to the nation. They willed it so. This was the country's manifest destiny.

"Fie upon you diplomats! You and the priesthood, between you, will drive the world to perdition.

"I know it has come to be your second nature, Strabo, to call this science. I call it vulgarity.

"Forge ahead, then! You are bound to do it anyway. Here too. And Hercules

alone knows what child of falsehood your inventive mind may bring forth, while you are in Rome. I cannot tell! Nor do I care to know!

"I want to love, embrace the whole world, beauteous maidens best of all. Thus I never caused another's downfall. And now I hope we understand each other."

With that he turned his back upon Strabo, who whistled away, while Himilco uttered these words. At last he said nonchalantly:

"You are and always will be a ladies' man, which, you imagine, absolves you from all else. Some day you, too, will stumble against the wrong one, who will pluck your feathers and bring you to your sober senses. Go ahead! Strabo can do without you!"

This said, he went to the opposite window, drumming leisurely on the wooden casing, and now and then uttering low, indistinct words of contempt, which Himilco fortunately could not understand.

While this scene transpired between the guests, Brutus was in the garden amid his children, lighthearted and happy as these, and upon their request assisting them in the games they played.

He had just succeeded in explaining to his daughters some rules of tennis, by helping them play the sets which they had failed to master, when Junius, the youngest of his sons, rushed up to him, loudly accusing the older Lucius, the king's god-son, of cheating at play with the quoits. Had the father not interfered, the two youngsters would have fought it out according to Roman custom. Lucius had already assumed the threatening posture of a prize-fighter before the contest, and loudly called to his brother: "Pray to Pollux, you milk face!" when the father stepped between them. Then nothing came of it but grievous threats and nicknames, such as always suggest themselves so easily in one's younger days.

"Father, Lucius has again cheated me by pushing his quoit nearer the line after having thrown it. And if I complain he flares up and calls me names. Thumbsucker he called me, and I won't have it. It's a long while since I did that, and I do not care to hear of it any more. He gets angry and violent just like his godfather, the king."

"Oh, you poor little baby boy," sneered

the other, "you must whine before your father again, as if with accusations you would learn to play the game."

"Listen to your father, Lucius! You are the older one and should be more considerate with your little brother. You were not always as tall as you are now, and it isn't your fault that you are the older one. This must not occur again, Lucius, do you hear?"

"Father," Lucius replied angrily, "you always take his part, right or wrong. No wonder the people call you Brutus. I am proud to bear the king's name, and shall strive to honor it. Let Junius play with his sisters, with whom he is not out of place. I shall play with him no more, and when once I wear the Toga, which happens soon, I shall not look at him any more, the whining accuser!"

Throwing his quoit on the ground, he was about to run away sulkily, when the father's hand held him to the spot. Himilco, who had observed the whole affair from the window, saw plainly how the father taught the son filial duty and parents' rights in the good old-fashioned way.

"Never forget, my young bear," he said to him, "that you are a Junian, and that to the father alone belongs the right of punishing his rebellious son. Let people call me what they may, here I am the master, not you, nor yet the king. My arm is still full of vigor, and perhaps too soon the disobedient son may learn that the Junians never were the rapsallions that some Tuscans are. I may soon put your loyalty to the test by requiring active work of you. Then look out that your heart beats in the right spot, and that you do honor to the Junian house. And now you may go and follow your Pedagogus to school."

Shamed by his father's earnest words, and conscious of his own wrong, Lucius stole away. Turning to the other children, the father added:

"I trust to hear no complaint of unseemly conduct toward the strangers. Remember, they are my guests and have important business with the king."

Astounded at what he had heard, Himilco turned to report the incident to Strabo, when that worthy's face already grinned upon him

like a stone image. He, too, had seen and heard. A sarcastic smile hovered about his lips, as he calmly said:

"You are right, Himilco, Brutus is not so foolish as he looks. An idiot before the people; a true man at home. Still he remains a mystery, which closer acquaintance with Tarquin alone can solve. He is a person of more importance to us than you may realize. He carries the keys to Rome, and we must win him over, if we are to mislead Tarquin.

"However, since you care nothing about this, I shall apply myself to solve the knotty problem, leaving you to your whims. Now let us go out to the garden, until they call us to table."

The garden of the Junian villa, after the manner of Roman gardens, was a true piece of art, extending from the house in gentle elevation to a point where the Urbian height joins the higher Esquiline. Its summit was crowned by the king's palace.

Tarquin, who loved splendor, had made a number of changes about old Servius' castle, and a practiced eye could easily detect these additions, which were of Tuscan architecture.

Immediately at the garden gate it was the palace in all its grandeur that occupied the men. Seen from where they stood, its foundations thickly bordered by the rich foliage of elm trees in the most distant part of the garden, the castle seemed floating in mid-air.

Involuntarily Strabo exclaimed: "Did the kings build their castle where they could observe the Junians, or have the latter constructed their abode where they might spy the movements of the others?"

Either seemed possible, and he would soon discover which was right. At this moment they entered the gravel walk leading to the left, which was covered and hedged in by luxuriant vines.

Clusters of grapes hung invitingly between the foliage, which also hid from view numerous birds that filched the dainty fruit amid joyous warbling. On this part of the garden Brutus lavished his particular care, and already Himilco sniffed the aroma of choice wines at the banquet table.

Where the path ended, a lawn spread its green carpet far to the right, where, in the midst of an artificial grove, richly ornamented

with statues of the gods, a cool spring emptied its crystal waters in graceful fall into a large stone basin. Adjoining this, one entered the prettiest olive grove, every tree bearing its burden of the dark and luscious fruit. Toward the house was the children's playground, which they had already seen. Next to it a small racetrack bore witness to the Patrician spirit which pervaded the whole.

Further to the rear were the servants' quarters; beyond this, at some distance, wine and oil cellars, granaries, stables and warerooms for dried fruit. Between these divisions fig and plum trees interchanged with myrtle, laurel and boxwood trees, or shrubbery. On the extreme left, climbing ivy wound its green branches in numberless entangling twists around stout poles, while near by vegetable beds showed turnips, onions, beans, cucumbers and pumpkins in amazing quantity. And then the manifold flower beds, the numbers of aromatic plants to be seen! In the background splendid elm trees reared their crowns in one unbroken line, dividing the Junian estate from that of the king.

All that goes to make a garden perfect,

Brutus had apparently provided in plenty. That was the judgment of the Carthaginians, who were about to turn their eyes toward the city, when a slave approached and enjoined them to appear at table.

Reluctantly Himilco parted from the beauty, the fresh, fragrant, seductive air of a Roman garden. The wealthy Carthaginians were far from enjoying such ideal, rustic life, and how often had he longed for it there!

IV.

Brutus, true to ancient custom, and ever devoted to the simple manners of the past, partook of his meals in the midst of his slaves. He was satisfied with the broth of spelt and for side dishes with beans, cabbage and radishes, which were either served separately, or flavored with sliced onions, and even garlic. Plain and wholesome as was the food, the table on which it was served was coarse and uncovered. Meat was added to the fare but very seldom—only on holidays, and then sparingly.

To-day, however, he had made an exception, and what dainties garden, cellar and his herds could furnish, the best had found their way into the kitchen. The Carthaginians should learn to know him ere Tarquin's seductive tongue could spin a net of lies about them and thus foil his own plans. Three Amphoræ of his most excellent Falernian had been removed from under the cobwebs of the cellar and leaned invitingly against the

wall. Their fiery contents would loosen the envoy's tongues. Thus thought Brutus, and smiled, as they were carried to the Triclinium.

A wonderful change had been wrought in Brutus' appearance, and the men scarcely knew him for his former self. The Toga of the morning had been exchanged for one snow-white and freshly washed, which became him splendidly. Refreshed by the bath, his eyes sparkled with new life, his movements were elastic, his speech was amiable, though earnest. This was Brutus, the Roman of ancient stock, the friend of the old Patrician order, the avenger of his brother, the king's most bitter enemy.

He had already given directions to Aulus, the head slave, to prepare the upper tower room at the south front of the house, and that the slaves should be excluded from the meal. Thither Brutus led his guests, after having greeted them in the Peristyle.

"May the gods favor our repast and direct our minds to the welfare of both nations," he said, after all were seated. At these words Himilco looked in astonishment, first at Strabo, then at Brutus, but neither of them

betrayed by either look or gesture what was going on within them.

It was past the ninth hour, and the heat had abated somewhat. The sun hovered above the Janiculus, as if about to go asleep. Light mists parted occasionally from the dark storm clouds which hung beyond the Aventine. Whenever one of these small clouds passed the sun, refreshing shadows moved across the ancient city by the Tiber. All signs pointed to a fertile rain, of which the city seemed sorely in need.

In the distance, beyond the field of Mars, where the river turns toward the eastern incline of the Capitol, the male youth of Rome splashed naked in the cooling water, thus enjoying a refreshing bath in playful boyish fashion. It was the Roman hour of rest, when all that could retired to the coolest part of their gardens, or enjoyed their meals.

"Neptune intends to send us water," Brutus interrupted the silence.

"May Ceres, the fertile and divine one, prepare the soil for the winter's seed, without injury to the overripe fruit of the gardens!"

Obedient to a nod from Brutus, ready

slaves now served the first course of the sumptuous meal, to which the envoys, and especially Himilco, did full justice. Now and then the younger one squinted longingly in the direction of the thick-bellied Amphoræ, almost devouring them, labels and all.

The meal opened with various kinds of meats, which were served on small squares of toasted bread. These were the far-famed quadrants, real dainties, without which no Patrician table was complete. Then followed dessert, consisting of preserved olives, dried fruits, nuts, and other sweetmeats.

Brutus did his best to entertain them, and for a time the conversation was quite general. The duration and events of the journey, where they had disembarked, and how they liked the military road which led from Ostia to Rome, were some of the questions which he propounded in rapid succession. At each of Strabo's answers, he would nod assuringly. Then he would urge Himilco to try another piece of meat, or pass him the honey from his own hives, praying that he try its sweetness. He freely praised the handiwork of his slaves. In such manner the meal terminated. In a

moment nimble slaves had cleared the table, on which they brought the Amphoræ, placing before each of the men a goblet of marvelous beauty from Tuscan workshop. This done, they left the room at the host's direction.

Brutus had thus far refrained from mentioning the occasion of their visit, and not a word had been spoken to prepare the guests for that which was about to follow.

Filling his own goblet, he motioned to the men to follow his example, which they did with a will. According to time-honored custom, Brutus sacrificed the half of his to the gods, and drank the remainder to the health and friendship of his guests and of Carthage. Strabo, replying to the toast, drank a hearty draught to the welfare of the king and their host. Himilco, delighted with the flavor of the wine, drained his cup and, refilling it, lauded Roman hospitality. Brutus smiled as he saw the fiery wine do its work so quickly, meanwhile spurring them on with a good example. Himilco's veins began to swell, his face looked like a burnished copper kettle, but still he hadn't enough.

Strabo, who was trained in the customs and sequels of a thousand wine bouts, had a predilection for the Falernian. However, he tasted of it but sparingly. He knew the trick of foreign diplomats to drink their opponents under the table, but none had thus far succeeded in laying him out. True, he had turned the tables on them more than once, but that was quite another thing. Whatever the object of this mysterious Roman, Strabo did not mean to be trapped by him. Thus he reasoned.

The goblets had been drained four times and filled again, when Brutus spoke as follows:

"Having declared our friendship by the wine, may the wine now inspire our tongues with that truth which it contains. First of all, the host owes his guests an explanation, for which your eyes have thus far searched in vain. Brutus is one among the people, another at his home. As yet you have failed to solve the riddle. Then listen to me! Tarquin selected me as your host, because he thinks you safe with me. You might learn too much if you lived with others. He be-

lieves me a simpleton, because I myself wish it so. I would ere this have shared my brother's fate, had I betrayed the least intelligence. For years I have now played this pitiable part to save my life and crush his power. The gods have sent you to my house, that I may open your eyes and warn you of Tarquin's wicked cunning. Let me tell you, Tarquin does not court your friendship to no purpose. His messenger to you had but just returned when the tuba sounded, calling the people to war against the Rutuli. Not that they have ever done anything to offend Rome, but then they are rich, and that is a *casus belli* for Tarquin. For six months he is now before the walls of Ardea, without being able to take the city. The people have been put off with empty promises; the senate, which is without power, succumbs to threats. The citizens are discontented, and the whole state is in a ferment on account of the heavy war taxes, which are sapping the land. All Rome demands peace, he alone wants war and spoils. And Carthage frightens the enemy's rear until he shall have won his victory. That is the reason for the alliance. Look at

the neighboring countries, all of which he first made happy by friendly alliances, then used them for his own ends, to subjugate them at last. I tell you, Tarquin will never rest, until he rules land and ocean, unless fate shall overtake him sooner at home. Take my word for it, his days are numbered here. He will not be king much longer. Thus speaks Brutus as he is, not as he acts. Therefore, if you are here to conclude a treaty, turn your back to the setting, your face toward the rising sun of Rome.

"To the welfare of Carthage, and the Roman republic, I say, Strabo! What do you think of it?"

At this outburst, Brutus had raised his goblet and looked at Strabo with a serious, searching mien. Himilco approved with youthful vehemence all that the Roman had said, while Strabo sought to conceal his excitement behind an air of indifference. Brutus had with one word stolen his own thunderbolt, for he had meant to sound him, later on, upon the same subject. And so contrary to all the rules of diplomacy!

Brutus spoke his own feelings, and the

truth of his words was reflected in his deep-set eyes. He really meant what he said. This was too much for the old diplomat and, weighing every word upon the scales of diplomacy, he slowly replied:

"Not so impetuous, noble Brutus, or you might repent of your words. However, our credentials are so general, that the possibility of even such a treaty is not beyond the compass of our power. Such things can't be treated rashly. We must weigh and consider. Neither must you forget that Tarquin himself proposed this alliance, and whatever may be done must needs be in the interest of his country. Carthage really seeks no alliance, knowing well her own inherent power. You see, Brutus, we rule the seas with our ships, and commerce is ours. All people, from the dense forests of Mauretania as far east as Lybia, owe us allegiance and pay us tribute. Every Roman knows our merchant and even the wily Greek buys his wares, because he cannot do otherwise. Sicily and Sardinia are under our protection and our power extends to the interior of Spain, where countless slaves dig gold for our treasury.

"Warlike guardians of our state stand ready near the pillars of Hercules, to drive all invaders from the seas with their well-armed ships and men. Many who attempted to sail these waterways lie in the measureless deep, mute witnesses of our power. We need no alliances, Brutus, but when a foreign people ask for friendship, well—we do not care to deny it. We freely grant protection to the weak and lend a helping hand to him who asks it of us. For this we ask nothing, absolutely nothing, except that our merchants may follow their business unmolested and establish colonies, wherever natural wealth demands the knowledge of our long experience.

"Tarquin's friendly attitude has pleased our senate mightily, for we know your power along these shores and are for that reason not averse to an alliance, if your interests are best conserved that way and our commerce finds a larger field. But the matter needs thorough consideration, especially on your account, if the outlook is not rosy here, as you say. Changes of government are always coupled with great danger to the state, unless all preparations for them have been wisely made

and the people well prepared. Disturbances which usually wreck the project must be avoided. As a rule, one has to grease the wheels a little, till all is ready. The priesthood is a potent factor, which must be secured. Its votaries will take with greedy hand your silent bribe-money, but this expenditure is always wise. After all is ready for the coup, they will tell the people—the gods willed it so. It was their wise providence and the country's manifest destiny that the change should come about. That always pleases the rabble, which lives in mortal fear of the eternal gods. Promises of preferment satisfy the warrior, gold the orator, who forges the annals, while senatorial dignity will gain the leaders of the worker's unions. This done, the rabble—or the people, as they love to be called in their vanity—will follow the leaders blindly and yell liberty! We have won the battle! We rule ourselves! We want no kings! That's the way it's done, ha, ha, ha!"

He rubbed his hands, delighted at his own words and looked sideways at Brutus, who merely said:

"Aye, Strabo, that's the way, and since you are here we shall, with your assistance, give Tarquin his deserts. All is ready and the die must soon be cast. All we need is a respectable pretext which makes the whole thing appear spontaneous. The rabble is with Tarquin, because he has always favored them. But then—the rabble has no arms and still fewer rights which anyone is bound to respect. The slightest gust of air will drive them on, though it be but artfully fanned. There is but one thing really in the way—the timidity of some of the Patricians. You alone can overcome that.

"Your hand, Strabo, and I, the designated first consul of the Roman republic, promise you a treaty by which your merchants shall enjoy the same trade privileges that our own citizens do. Your ships may freely enter every port, and you may carry your goods into the country without an import duty. Carthage may establish free trading posts along the coast. All beyond our ocean boundaries shall be yours, all within them belongs to us. And all we ask for these concessions is, that Carthage withdraw its hand

from Tarquin and leave him to Rome and the gods of Rome. After that upright friendship between the two nations—no deception, and loyal help against all enemies. In this way both nations can be happy and great in the enjoyment of peace.”

“Hold on, Brutus, with your enthusiast’s dream of eternal peace! It cannot be realized. Learn of Strabo that peace among men has never been of long duration, nor will it ever be. Imposition, the deception of one’s fellow man, is part of our nature, and the higher civilization, the special rights which one people believe to enjoy above another, are but too often a cloak for the commission of all manner of wrongs. We will be friends so long as our mutual interests do not conflict. So I say, Rome must never meddle in our international commerce, shall peace be maintained between us. The advantage will, of course, be mutual. We rule the seas and control commerce, you till your fields and subjugate the weaker tribes of Italy, while Carthage threatens their rear, should the dogs ever become rebellious. That’s what I call an ideal alliance, such as we always conclude.

"However, before we talk of treaties with a government which can only come into power by expelling the existing one, we must know how far your enterprise has progressed, and how far the means employed are consistent with the state of affairs. Tell us, therefore, how Tarquin came to the throne, and how he has conducted the government, that we may judge whether your undertaking merits success.

"You cannot count upon our support, if in our opinion your efforts are doomed to fail, and instead of advantages to us, only enmity and serious loss might result, should we grant you assistance. We cannot chain our fate to the failure of a reckless undertaking. However, if success may be assured with our help and you conserve our interests, then Carthage will be your friend.

"Remember, Brutus, Rome is not yet a republic, as long as Tarquin holds firmly to the reins of government."

V.

The sun was just sinking behind the Janiculus when Brutus, refilling the goblets, began his narrative:

"Do you believe in heredity, Strabo, and that the father's sins are visited upon the son, that a mother's artfulness and cruel nature are transmitted to the daughter? Or that the unclean blood of both parents when transplanted to their offspring, spurs to crime and in the end lacerates and destroys itself?

"I firmly believe it, nay, I know it, since my beloved Rome groans under Tarquin's rule. Tuscan treachery and rapine have come with Tuscan art. Nursed in the very shadow of the Capitol they have grown apace, until now Cæsaric frenzy ravages the land with abominable crimes and vices, dragging the people into degeneracy. A race of parasites, sycophants and false friends enmeshes the populace like poisonous ivy, destroys the

liberties of the people, undermines our old institutions and with the breath of treason drags down all that is noble. Formerly the kings of Rome were the first servants of the people. Guided by the popular will, the senate bestowed the honor upon him who had gallantly served his country as a warrior or in the councils of the nation. This was the will of the eternal gods, thus did the Romans make their choice. Not so the Tarquinians.

"The road which brought the alien Tuscans upon the throne is bespattered with blood. There is no artifice which they omitted, no simulation which they failed to use, no crime which was too vile to be committed, if by the act they gained the end in view. They have raised the alien scum to senatorial honor, have divided the lands acquired in war among their menial adherents and branded the loyal Romans as traitors. Whoever crossed their path fell a victim of their cruelty, he who submitted to them became their abject slave. Expert in crime and degenerate in unspeakable vice, they succeeded but too well to corrupt the people with their own inherent poison. The great man was loaded with privi-

leges, the Plebeian with games and presents, the soldier with spoil and licentiousness.

"And when the sphere of crime had been exploited on all sides, and they found themselves deprived of fresh victims, their eye turned upon their own family, in which they ravaged and exterminated the more openly, the more the people were attached to the chosen victims. In this manner did Lucius Tarquinius become king.

"Let no one ever speak to Brutus of the divine rights of kings!

"A brother's and sister's foul murder made Tarquin and Tullia man and wife. Adultery had ere this sullied the bridal bed of the relatives of king Servius, who, too weak to tame the ungovernable natures under his roof, permitted the horrible to occur. The shameless criminals celebrated their union over the open grave of the slain victims. This accomplished, the fiendish woman did not rest until the father shared the daughter's fate. Tarquin, her ever willing tool, spent his days among the noble families and with the fathers of the senate, sowing discontent. At night the walls of their chamber were silent wit-

nesses to the most heinous plots against king Servius.

"They succeeded but too well. The king's past was shrouded in mystery, his reign against Patrician interests. To flatter the Plebeians, he had doubled the burdens of the nobles, thus exposing their wealth to the envy of the multitude. Without a true friend among the great, Servius soon found out that the Plebeians alone could not help him in case of need. Incited and tempted by Tarquin, the Plebeian leaders left his cause and the rabble soon followed in their wake.

"That was a day of disgrace for Rome, when Tarquin, deeming the time opportune, called the senate together and before its servile members and the astonished people, dumb with fear or flattery, proclaimed himself king.

"Too late did Servius, bowed with age and sorrow, appear among them, to drive away the arrant usurper of kingly power. In vain did he appeal to the senators, or raise his imploring voice toward the degenerate and venal rabble.

"'Down with Servius!' they shouted.

"'Long live king Tarquin!' bellowed disreputable senators.

"Throwing his arms about Servius, Tarquin hurled him from the stairs of the senate chamber, meeting with scarcely any resistance, and leaving him for dead below.

"At this moment Tullia appeared among the surging throng in the Forum, riding in her chariot and striving to be the first to greet the misguided husband as king. Being at last in full possession of his power, yet distrusting the eager crowding populace, he ordered his accomplice in crime to return at once to the Esquiline.

"Servius, barely able to move his broken limbs, had meanwhile reached the Cyprian alley aided by his faithful servants, when assassins sent by Tarquin murdered him. There he lay when Tullia, the inhuman daughter, giving her steeds full rein, dashed over the lifeless body of the father, whose blood bespattered the wheels and her garments. Driven by the Furies and almost maddened by this her latest crime, she stormed into the royal castle to wash the bloodstains from her face and dress.

"All Rome was now in uproar. The howling of the masses in the Forum fore-

boded ill for all true Romans. The friends of Servius fled in terror to their homes, there to meet their master's fate. Thus ended this memorable day, replete with unchained passion. Rome's traditions were buried with the setting sun. Rome's freedom gave way to tyranny.

"Tarquin at once surrounded his person with armed guards, as yet feeling insecure in the possession of his power. Thus he made his entry into Servius' castle, embracing his sinful wife with the same arms which had killed the father.

"Since he did not count upon the people's love, he sought to fortify his power by inspiring fear. Having refused burial to Servius upon the pretext that Romulus, the founder of the nation, had gone without it, he cast his evil eye upon the senators, then among the men of noble birth. No true man was permitted to live. Only the lowest flattery, the most natural idiocy or abject poverty protected against the ax. He who showed his sorrow was a traitor. Wealth meant certain death. Thus did he rid the state of its noblest men, thus he rewarded many of those who had assisted him.

"My brother's fate brought me to my senses. I feigned idiocy, disinherited myself of most all the possessions of our family, and as a reward my life was spared. To prevent his own sister from ever endangering him, and to gain the Punians for his friends, Tarquin gave her to my father for a wife. My own offspring, suffering under the mask assumed by me, might reap the people's mockery, but never their assistance, should they entertain designs upon the throne. To show he had implicit trust in me, perhaps also to deceive the people, who loved my brother, about the real cause of his execution, I, the acknowledged idiot, was made Tribune of the body guard. All this is very deceptive, and usually fools those who do not know him. Unless warned by Brutus, no man has ever learned to know Tarquin's real nature, until too late.

"Tarquin has deprived Romans of their life and liberty, contrary to our laws and without the sanction of the senate. He has executed, exiled and punished with confiscation of their property upon any and all pretexts, not only those who had aroused his suspicions, but

also those who by their wealth had awakened his insatiate greed. He rules the land tyrannically, declares war without just cause and concludes peace and treaties, counseled only by his kitchen cabinet, servile creatures all of them, who execute what Tullia puts into his own degenerate head.

"Believe me, the people have long since awakened from their boisterous dream and come again to their sober senses, but too late. They pass their days in dull brooding, praying for deliverance. And the proper cause will overthrow the throne.

"If Tarquin's honor did not vanish in the mire of his degeneracy, one would at least have to credit him with being a clever general. Just let me give you an example. He wanted to gain the Latins by a treaty. To gain his point, he married his daughter to Mamilius of Tusculum, who boasted of an extended friendship. Thus he made the latter's friends his own. However, the noble Turnus, their commander, saw his cunning and warned against it. Having won Mamilius by marriage, Turnus fell a victim of Tarquin's calumny. The treaty was concluded. Their armed men

were mingled with those of Rome in equal proportion, but Roman generals commanded the united forces. Too late the Latins saw their mistake.

"He besieged Pometia, because this city of the Volski was unusually rich. Allied with the Latins and at peace with the Tuscans, he easily took the city, securing forty silver talents of plunder. With this he laid the foundations for the temple of Jupiter, to which neither the priests nor the great god himself objected. The Pometians were made slaves. Numa, the Pontifex, told the people that it was Jupiter's will and all praised the great god and Tarquin, his best servant.

"Still more dishonorable was his treatment of Gabii, against which city he had declared war without any cause whatever. When the war was prolonged beyond all expectation, Tarquin had recourse to his trickery. He withdrew his forces and worked away at the temple with masterly devotion. Instigated by the parents, Sextus, their son, quietly made his way to Gabii, where he complained most bitterly against his father's cruelty, which had made him homeless, and begged

to be received as one of them. Whatever else of wicked cunning the parents had endowed him with was here displayed to great advantage.

"Already Tarquin's cruelty had turned against his own blood, and it seemed as if he were intent upon depopulating his castle as he had the senate chamber. Thus he accused him. The honest men of Gabii, who knew of Tarquin's cruelty from other exiles, believed his every word and took him in. Once there, Sextus continually advised that the war be renewed. He wanted to punish his father, he said. He gained their confidence more and more, and at last found himself at the head of their army. The Romans, according to agreement, were driven back in several engagements. Now the misguided Gabians were ready to believe that Sextus was a gift to them from heaven.

"Then came the time for action. Secretly he sent a trusted messenger to his father in Rome to ask what more was needed, since he already ruled Gabii. Tarquin, mistrusting the messenger, pretended to be indignant. Walking back and forth in his garden, he

listened without uttering a single word. From time to time he would strike the tallest poppies with his cane and growl at the astonished messenger. The latter hurried back to Sextus and informed him of what had happened. He understood his father's language better. Within a few days the foremost men of Gabii fell by the ax, victims of Sextus' calumnies. Then the city was delivered to Rome without a struggle. Too late the people cursed Sextus as a traitor.

"Now Tarquin ruled all the country about Rome, and began draining the land with his craze for splendid temples and heavy taxes. The best men have been reduced by him to serfdom, the treasury is empty, the state impoverished, and yet there is no limit to his extravagance. The building of temples and sewers still goes on, and the games and feasts still progress.

"The people's grumbling at last reached him, and he is intent to regain his lost popularity by filling the empty treasury.

"Ardea is rich, the town is filled with spoils, and one-half of the plunder shall go to the soldier. That became the war cry of the

Romans. Incidentally the realm of Jupiter and the minor gods might be enlarged by a benevolent assimilation of the Rutuli and their wealth. The Pontifices blessed the willing sons of Rome who rushed to arms. The Augurs foretold victory from the flight and eating of the birds. The gods wanted war and carnage to extend their earthly empire.

"Whoever warned and pleaded was a traitor and no honest Roman. Tarquin, not relying upon the gods' providence alone, as did the foolish people, had quietly dispatched his messenger to Carthage, tendering you his friendship. You swallowed the bait whole, and now the Rutuli are made aware by devious ways that Carthage is Rome's friend. But here is where the hitch lies. The city offers stubborn resistance; in Rome there are hungry mouths to be fed, and the land groans under the heavy taxes levied for the unholy war. Already the Romans demand to know what we are really fighting for, but Tarquin remains silent.

"The temples, the circus, the sewers and the lavish expenditures have consumed millions, and now, when all the monuments near com-

pletion, there will be no more work for the people. The rabble clamors for bread. The Romans long for their old traditions. Twice has Tarquin cleared the city by establishing colonies. Now he is at his wit's end and knows not which way to turn. This is the opportune moment to get rid of him and of kingly rule at the same time.

"Already each of his three sons is striving for the crown with the treachery and cunning inherited from the parents. All of them are moral degenerates to be shunned and feared by virtuous men and women. They are lauded at revelries and among courtesans, and none excel them at the races and in the brothel.

"And Rome should longer endure this tribe! Never, Strabo! Wait until you hear the people's groans and you will better comprehend my bitter words. Then you may act as you think best.

"Now you have the ragged family tree of the Tarquinians, whose sun is about to set. Heredity has fought its battle, but too slow for Rome and all true Romans.

"All is in readiness and you shall see how Rome deals with tyrants.

"Sic semper tyrannis! is our parole. Should anyone whisper these words to you, know that he is a confederate. The army is on our side. Numa, the Pontifex, is among the conspirators. The leaders of the Plebeians have been bribed, and we have their promise to deliver the rabble. At sunrise to-morrow, Tarquin's fate will be decided and, ere another day is passed, Rome will be without a king.

"To the welfare of Carthage and the Roman republic, Strabo! Drink and sign the treaty."

VI.

Their goblets met with a merry sound. Even Strabo was carried away by Brutus' narrative and convinced of its absolute truthfulness. Quite mechanically he took the parchment which Brutus drew from beneath the folds of his Toga. His surprise knew no bounds when he had unrolled the document.

"Why, this is a treaty!" he cried, when examining it by the light of a bronze lamp, which Aulus had just placed upon the table.

"*Senatus Populusque Romanus!*" he continued, reading.

"How is that possible? This sounds as if the government was already yours."

"So it is! Just read ahead!" Brutus replied, calmly.

For the first time in his life the wily Punian saw himself outwitted. He was dumbfounded. Was Brutus a mindreader or had he thought too loud? These Romans seemed to be diplomats after all.

"This is the very treaty which Tarquin

meant to grant you," continued Brutus, unruffled. "Seems to me he was ready to show great favor, for it is really very much in the interest of Carthage.

"The republic will agree to the same terms, without having his sinister motives in mind. He figures, 'the bigger the bait, the larger the fish.' We, however, ask nothing beyond your assistance to overthrow him.

"If you are agreeable, I shall inform the army before Ardea that Carthage withdraws her support. Then the soldier will follow his leaders, who are all on our side. All else will be easy."

Strabo read aloud:

"The senate and the Roman people intend by these presents to conclude a treaty of friendship with the Republic of Carthage, both nations, through their accredited representatives, herewith agreeing to the following articles for their mutual protection and welfare.

I. "Carthage acknowledges Rome, as head of the Latin league, to be in full possession of the seacoast from the Tiber to Terracina. All tribes of Italy, refusing to recog-

nize this fact, are hereby declared enemies of Rome and of Carthage, her ally.

II. "Neither Roman merchants nor those of the Latin league shall be permitted, without necessity, to anchor south of the Fair Promontory. They may, however, follow their vocation in Carthage and as far west as Lybia. They shall enjoy equal trading privileges with those of Carthage, in Sicily and Sardinia.

III. "Rome hereby acknowledges Carthage's sovereignty over Sicily and Sardinia and promises to hold with confederate military Ardea, after its occupation, Antium, Laurentium, Circeii and Terracina, thereby assuring protection to the merchants of Carthage who trade along the coast. In all of said localities and in the interior as well, Carthaginian merchants shall enjoy equal trading privileges and the protection of the law of the land.

IV. "The island of Corsica is hereby declared neutral territory and placed under the joint protectorate of both nations.

V. "Carthage agrees, in case of war, to assist Rome against all foreign enemies or

rebellious allies, provided the *casus belli* shall be the latter's refusal to acknowledge Roman sovereignty.

VI. "In consideration of the rights hereby conferred, Carthage agrees not to invade Italy, except in the interest of Rome, nor to suffer others so to do, without objection. Upon a violation of this article, Rome reserves the right to expel from her territory all resident Carthaginians and to declare this treaty void.

VII. "One of the principal aims of this agreement shall be to spread the blessings of civilization within the territory allotted and declared subject to said countries. All individuals or tribes refusing to acknowledge the suzerainty or protectorate of either of said countries, as hereby agreed, are declared public enemies and traitors.

VIII. "This treaty shall not be made public until ratified by the respective governments, parties thereto.

IX. "All of the preceding articles shall be deemed in full force and effect, however, as a secret friendship and peace treaty immediately upon their execution."

"Well, Strabo, what exceptions can you make to the treaty?" inquired Brutus. "I deem it fair to Carthage."

"Well, that requires study," the former remarked. "Take the wording of the fifth article, for an instance. In my opinion that is misleading. As you have it, Rome might involve Carthage in all sorts of wars. It would be quite different if you said Carthage promises to assist by guaranteeing neutrality. You know what I mean, Brutus; sympathetic neutrality, such as we always maintain toward friends. When once you have gained our sympathy the moral effect will soon make itself felt. That is usually sufficient to inspire the enemy with fear. Don't forget our ships, Brutus, which have always been our trump card in that kind of game! They are posers and avoid engagements with the enemy. Besides, our commercial relations extend through many lands and we cannot participate so easily without suffering injury ourselves. I assume that Rome does not want this to happen, if our usual maneuvers have the same effect. Bluffing is a great game, Brutus, and Carthage is master in it, ha, ha, ha!

"You see, we approach the enemy's shore with a vast number of ships, which continue to make threatening demonstrations, on the pretext of protecting our interests. Lots of noise makes the enemy tremble, ha, ha, ha! We fight only when we must.

"Carthage's friendship is yours, if you change the wording of the treaty. Just say, 'Carthage agrees to assist Rome with sympathetic neutrality,' and we sign."

Brutus changed the fifth article as suggested. It was really all he desired. Then taking the stylus again, he scribbled his name at the foot of the document.

With a laugh he struck out the word "Brutus," which had slipped in unnoticed, saying, "Since the people dubbed me Brutus, I have become so accustomed to the word that I almost constantly add it to my name without being aware of the mistake. The treaty, however, shall bear my true name."

The rising moon shone upon two men, each of whom believed to have outwitted the other. But Tarquin's fate was sealed, and Punian loyalty had scored another diplomatic victory.

Steps were now heard in the street, then

the gate was opened. Brutus clapped his hands and Aulus appeared in the door. Brutus whispered some directions to him and he left hurriedly. After a while the figure of the Centurio who had received them in the morning was seen in the doorway.

"*Sic semper tyrannis!*" he saluted Brutus, apparently unmindful of the envoys' presence.

Brutus answered: "Claudius, let your best man ride to Ardea. Direct him to tell the Tribune Collatinus that Carthage has withdrawn her support. He knows what it means. Let him see no one else and return at once. And now hurry!"

Claudius was hardly gone when Lucretius, the prefect of the city, stepped in.

"*Sic semper tyrannis!*" he greeted. Brutus merely directed him to have his men in readiness and to distribute no bread on the morrow.

"The army is advised," he added. Lucretius bowed himself out smilingly.

Shortly after, Aulus announced the leader of the Plebeians, Quintus Barbatius, whose towering form followed close behind. Quintus was a strong, broad-shouldered man who

had been a well-known coppersmith in his younger days. His ready tongue had made him a leader among the workers of the city years ago. His talent for organization made him the feared advocate of Plebeian rights. It was not the first time that a few far-seeing ones had accused him of corruptibility, but without lessening his power. Tarquin had usually found him reliable, but had failed to reward his services according to merit. At least this was Quintus' own opinion, and it was sufficient to make him the king's enemy. When Brutus, beyond the promised bag of gold, held out to him the further promise of a seat in the senate, his gratitude was overwhelming, his zeal without limit.

"*Sic semper tyrannis!*" was his greeting. Brutus nodded with a smile, and replied:

"Go into the Forum, Quintus, and gather the people about you. Attack Tarquin's colonial policy, bewail the fate of the Plebeians, the hardships of the warrior, the burdens heaped on the citizen. Praise liberty to the skies, demand a popular form of government and the abolition of war taxes. Prepare the Plebeians for our holy cause. Tell them that

Tarquin wants to keep them on the ragged edge. To-morrow you are to do likewise. Carthage is our friend."

Quintus Barbatus did not wait to hear this a second time. He ran as fast as his legs would carry him to perform his given duty.

Not long after, Numa Marcius, the Pontifex Maximus, entered. He, too, gave the parole. His well-fed, rotund face and figure were a monument of contentment and peace, apparently open to all but revolutionary thoughts. Aulus trudged behind him with a chair. Following Brutus' direction, he set a goblet before him.

Having introduced the men, Brutus began: "Well, my dear Numa, how are the gods? Methinks to-day they favored Rome. Carthage has acknowledged the republic and our cause is won. Call a consistory and inform the college of priests, that all may do their duty when the time comes. You know with what boundless joy the people will greet the dawn of liberty. See to it that nothing goes amiss. The great Jupiter has surely decreed Tarquin's ruin.

"How do you like my Falernian? Good?

You may have another goblet. You priests of the gods are known connoisseurs of good wines. However, even your praise cannot improve my Falernian."

Numa smacked his lips and looked about unctuously, first at the envoys, then at Brutus. It seemed he wanted to tell him something that no one else should hear.

"Go ahead," Brutus encouraged him; "the Carthaginians are our friends and we need have no secrets from them. What have you again? Since your intimate converse with the gods you seem so distrustful of common mortals."

- Then Numa began: "The Sibyl, whose books Tarquin bought at my suggestion, did not deem it wise to remain longer in Rome, since he cursed her as a sorceress. She is now beyond his reach in her beloved Cumæ. Tarquin foams and rages and begins to regret the gold he paid for the wonderful books. His cowardly fear alone prevents him from laying hold on me. It was a capital idea, which has had its good effect. Rely on it, Tarquin will remain in camp, because he truly believes in his downfall. You should have seen him as I

read the divine sayings in his presence. Every line fitted him and he was awestruck—appalled. I tell you, Brutus, his eyes burned in their sockets when I read about regicide and the unjust reign of the threefold murderer. He turned pale and trembled like a criminal when I read that a fratricide, whose wife had caused the death of father and sister, should be the last king of Rome. He danced around the hall like one possessed and cursed the Sibyl, to praise her the next moment as one inspired by the gods. Now he wanted to capture and punish her, then he would look at me imploringly and dismiss the lictors. He even told me confidentially that the spirits of his murdered victims continually pursued him, and that he often cannot sleep. Tullia, in her frequent midnight wanderings about the castle, washes the father's blood from dress and face and raves like one in utter despair. When he saw that I showed little sympathy, he inquired how a strange woman could possibly learn all this. Of course, I explained to him that none but the gods confer such wisdom, to punish him who has offended them. Then he stormed and fumed against all of us, even

against the great Jupiter, whom he swore an oath to depose. In this frame of mind he went to the army, which he believes is still true to him. You know how he acts when he has one of his insane attacks. Therefore, I pray, protect my hallowed person, Brutus!"

"Never fear, saintly Numa; all is well in hand. The army is with me to a man. And then, Tarquin is a moral coward and superstitious as a Plebeian. Pray do not look at it so timidly! You know liberty is at stake and to gain it all is permissible. Do not forget that you have promised absolution of the gods to all who lend a helping hand. As for me, I deem it superfluous, for Jupiter well knows that I am in the right. Now you may go and say your prayers."

"One thing more, Brutus! Sextus and his friends have arrived from Ardea and are as usual disturbing the city's peace. Since sunset they are making the rounds of the taverns, offending the eternal gods."

Then, bowing to the envoys, he left the room. Brutus had left his seat and stood at the window as if expecting more visitors. From the city below and along the hill-

sides the glimmer of many lights was seen. A clear, starlit sky hung over the city. The eternal fire in the temple of Vesta gleamed brightly just below them. The dark outlines of the capital stood in sharp contrast to the picture of the city. The Forum was full of life. An orator seemed to hold the interest of the multitude, which rewarded him with frequent shouts of applause. Directly above them at a little distance stood the white house, as the Romans called the royal castle. The eyes of the men were long riveted upon its façade, as if intent upon identifying among the figures flitting back and forth behind the pale walls that of Tullia, the wild and horrid queen of Rome.

Thus they had been standing for quite a while when Strabo, noticing Himilco's heavy eyes and feeling drowsy himself, carelessly said to Brutus: "Methinks, noble Brutus, it is time we retire. You Romans are well up in hospitality. We partook too much of your heavy wine and nature now demands her rights. The meal and conversation have given us great pleasure, I assure you. Besides, you have a difficult task before you. May you meet with success!"

Brutus pressed his hand kindly and left the men in Aulus' care, who led them to their quarters. Brutus himself repaired to the Atrium to offer sacrifices to the gods, as was his custom. It was midnight when he extinguished his lamp and sought his couch. It had not seemed so soft for years. His day of revenge was dawning—the sun of liberty for his beloved Rome.

VII.

Returned to their quarters, Strabo walked back and forth, pondering anew the articles of the treaty and rubbing his hands contentedly. A faint smile played about his lips. The Roman had been trapped so easily. Now they might quarrel to their heart's content; what did he care? With a good deal of self-satisfaction he was already contemplating the vote of thanks from the senate. His reputation had again been confirmed, his star stood in the fullness of power. And all this without a stroke. Carthage had nothing else to do than look on—and bide her time.

Neither Sicily nor Sardinia, these strongholds of Carthage's power, could now count on help from Rome, should they ever make for liberty. Without wishing it, Brutus had played into the hands of Carthage. Let Rome once be without a king and her power would crumble away. One would be in favor of and another opposed to war. Opposing parties would spring up and destroy their unity.

What a glorious opportunity for a Punian to undermine the state by corrupting the individual citizen!

Again Strabo rubbed his hands and nodded contentedly, until his curly locks danced about his forehead.

"There you go again, like an eternal pendulum," Himilco called sleepily from his corner.

"Again this inevitable plunge into diplomatic cobwebs, I suppose. I know what is going on in your mighty brain. You are figuring on the effects of your triumph, and see yourself already wearing a laurel wreath, praised by the senate and petted by the people, who think you are a conjurer.

"Oh, how shortsighted these mortals are! They will never calculate beforehand the consequences of a deed, but the diplomat, who imagines to know them, does not get the blows when the dance of war begins.

"Brutus has vanquished you, Strabo. To accomplish Tarquin's overthrow he has signed the very treaty which the king had intended for us. It is another question whether he will keep his word with us, now that he has the

treaty. You count your chickens before they are hatched.

"The very opposite of what you expect will occur. You may reason with one, with a whole people—never. Neither can you trust them long, for any curbstone orator may turn the multitude. So beware of the people, Strabo!

"They will jealously guard their rights, overestimate their power, perchance, and regard all strangers as their enemies. Besides, the Roman learns to know our trickery by the treaty. Our loyalty toward friends will surely edify him, and the avarice of our merchants will soon open his eyes. Then, I say, the two nations will come to blows, which you should really have, for you have mixed the broth.

"Lucky if you shall then sleep in the tomb of your fathers, beside those trusty surveyors of the republic. It seems to be your second nature to establish false boundaries for Carthage, send colonists into the disputed territory, and, in the end, as if for pastime, drive away the rightful owners by force, or, more simple still, kill them. Then Carthage has shown her

power again. Then we call ourselves the carriers of civilization.

"Dido was truly right when she asked land sufficient to span with a bull's hide. And yet she drove a shrewd bargain when she cut the hide into small strings. She is the mother of Carthage, and we have but improved upon her methods, until to-day not a million bulls' hides will suffice to span our possessions. And still we haven't enough. Why are we not satisfied with our boundaries? The ocean is a natural partition wall which we should not destroy. I tell you, the fate of others does not concern us. It is our manifest destiny to make the people happy within our own boundaries.

"And as for these Romans! They are not one whit better than we, but equally as powerful. And still you imagine to have allied yourself with a nation of cowherders. Didn't you hear Brutus speak about the bait and the fish? We are the fish; the bait is the advantage which we expect to gain by the alliance; but the Roman holds the net. I can see them already in Sicily. And once there, it isn't far to Carthage, Strabo. They are insatiable like ourselves and the friendship will be shortlived.

"If they take Sicily, well, we shall only lose that which was never ours by right. This, then, would be retaliating justice. But tell me, Strabo, when did we ever combat a strong people?

"Sardinia asked our aid against pirates. We expelled the pirates and then took their place.

"Sicily! If ever there was a people defrauded of its very birthright, we did it there.

"Poor Lybia! Poor Mauretania! Thrice poor Numidia! Not even your lions tear tender babes with such bestial delight with which we robbed your treasures and made your people slaves. We came as your friends. We left as highway robbers. The bones which rot in your sandy deserts attest the blessings of our civilization.

"Hispania's soil is rich with gold and silver. That alone sufficed to treat her people as enemies. First came our priests—the advance agents of fiery Moloch—to bring to these benighted souls the glad tidings from our glorious gods. Then followed our merchants to exploit and rob the native's wealth; and when the people rebelled, we send ships and war-

riors. To subjugate them? Nay, merely to make them familiar with our civilization by benevolent assimilation, which with us always means slavery or certain death. Soon they will succumb and then we take possession and call ourselves the rightful owners of the land.

"In this manner have we deceived all who trusted us blindly. That is the reason why we have no friends to-day. That's why we look for alliances with which to bolster up our waning fortunes. They all shun us and our corrupting gold, because they know that we wish to be easy gainers by the misfortune of others and reap the benefit which false friendship has procured. Let the shrewd Roman once know our history and he will turn the tables and add fuel to the fire of discontent. That will be the end of all our glory. Anybody can build ships, so we need not boast of them. We have no soldiers that are worth a straw. They are paid hirelings, who will faint at the sight of freemen.

"By the fiery Moloch! Why don't you listen, instead of walking to and fro like a madman?"

"My dear Himilco, they have no money.

We have it in abundance and can buy our soldiers. If that is not sufficient, well, then we can increase the taxes, bleed the subjugated countries and buy still more soldiers. Our bankers will lend more in case we should have need of it. To obtain it, we shall hypothecate the revenues of the land. The people must foot the bill, because it is wicked to repudiate just debts and—well, our capitalists want to live, too.

“Just think of it, they must fortify all their coast cities to protect our commerce! I tell you, Himilco, it is the grandest treaty we ever dreamed of. But that this Roman should be so well informed! This Tarquin, I mean. A wise head, I tell you. Too bad, he isn’t a Carthaginian.”

Then suddenly standing erect before Himilco: “Do you think for a moment that he may be driven off without ceremony? Chase a wasp that has tasted blood and the beast will always return. Tarquin will do the **same** thing. And not till then will my **highest** art come into play.

“A bit of gold, Himilco, a bag full of it—that will always do the business. At the same

time make a sad, kind face, as if we pitied his ill luck and were astounded at the way he was betrayed and driven out—and ever willing to put him on his feet again——

“Who, do you think, will get the worst of it? We have the treaty, both king and people regard us as their friends—and I tell you the fur will fly in Italy. You see, my boy, old Strabo knows his business. Later on, they will both ask us for assistance, and then—we will ride into Rome some fine morning as masters of the situation.”

“Fie upon you, Strabo, here we are living under a strange roof, enjoy Roman hospitality—and you are planning treachery! I shall never lend a hand to it. You may brand me traitor, exile me and confiscate my fortune—I shall not break my word to Rome.

“I shall consider it an honor to be laughed at by the sons of fur-dealers and money changers. Ridiculed, perhaps, for being too stupid to lower myself to their standard of morals! History will be our judge, and it will treat me kindlier. I tell you again, you have been duped by one shrewder than yourself, simply because of the advantage to be gained. This

treaty will cause our downfall. True, they may fight it out among themselves now, but when the Carthaginian lion is to be attacked, all will lend a willing hand. Our greed for gold, the baseness of our friendship, all these will unite the tribes of Italy. And woe to our people, if ever the avenging spirits of murdered nations rise up against us!

"I hear their war cry now: 'Carthage must be destroyed!'"

"Himilco, you are not a Carthaginian, if you talk like that!"

"Rather a man, Strabo, than a Carthaginian such as you are!"

"If you were at the helm, we would have to return the conquered territories and leave these poor people, who now enjoy our protection and civilization, to their own bitter fate. Why, they would kill each other! That would be a crime against our enlightened age. The world would rot in barbarism."

"Indeed, Strabo, whose burden have we ever carried without deceiving, robbing and enslaving him? And those who defended their own and did not want our yoke—we murdered. If this is civilization, then we have truly earned a crown.

"Always scraping together more gold, enlarging our commerce, spreading our abominable gods—if it has to be accomplished by the robbery and murder of nations! It was the wish of Hercules! It is our manifest destiny among the nations! Do not touch the subject any more. I want to sleep—and if you intend to enlarge the borders of our land, pray don't forget to consult the Romans first. They might not agree to your calculations. Good night, Strabo!"

Strabo was visibly out of humor over the young man's words. He stood at the window for a long time, thinking.

"These youngsters have no appreciation for us older ones any more. These hotheads are liable to tear down wilfully all that we have built up with a vast amount of labor," he grumbled in disgust. At last the lamp died out, and the greatest statesman of his time was soon asleep.

VIII.

In the afternoon of the same day, Sextus, the king's son, and two of his most trusted companions, tired of the continued monotony of camp life, had mounted their horses for a trip to Rome, as was their wonted custom once or twice a week.

As he rode away, Sextus called to the Tribune Collatinus, who had curtly declined to go:

"You are being henpecked a good deal since the beautiful Lucretia has tied her apron strings about you. Methinks you need a substitute, since you find so little enjoyment among our Roman maidens and even at Colatia, preferring, as you do, the military service to the bridal bed."

Smilingly the latter had replied: "Lucretia knows the man she loves. And were you a king's son a hundred times over, never could you deprive me of sleep on her account. Go and see the Roman maidens who enjoy your favor. There I would be out of place with you."

Only a few days ago Collatinus had accompanied Sextus on one of these junkets and invited his cousin to dinner. To-day he did not care to renew the experiment, for Lucretia had expressed herself quite vigorously in disapproval. Exhilarated from wine, Sextus had behaved most disgracefully at the house, and, in the presence of the hostess, had taken liberties with the maid slaves, which caused them all to blush.

Then, too, the Tribune was expecting news from Brutus, to whom he had sworn allegiance. Thrusting his sword into the earth, that the sparks flew in all directions, he hissed contemptuously: "*Sic semper tyrannis!* Take care, Sextus, that you return a king's son."

The arrival of the envoys had been noised about the camp, and already opinions were divided. Some argued that the besieged city could not be misled by these reports, while others maintained, its inhabitants would open the gates at once if they knew that Tarquin had Carthage for an ally.

Among the latter was the king, who had arrived in camp at daybreak, to lead a planned

attack in person, in which this piece of strategy should contribute its share to speedy success.

He sat in his tent alone, morose and out of sorts. The events of the last few days had startled him. The Sibyl, whose books he acquired, knew his past, had laid bare the hidden secrets of his life and prophesied his ruin. Numa, the Pontifex, who had advised the purchase of the sacred writings, to read from them the fatal truth, was convinced of the displeasure of the gods. It seemed to be beyond question, that evil deeds merit the punishment of the gods. And to think of all the sacrifices he had offered at the priest's command, to propitiate Jupiter!

All the plunder of Pometia had been used to erect the most magnificent temple in his honor. The people's hands were sore, their pockets empty, since he had drained the resources of the land for the higher glory of Jupiter. In his behalf he had plundered and murdered and razed strange temples to the ground. Was Jupiter insatiable, or were his own crimes beyond atonement? Repeatedly he had laid these questions before the sacred

consistory to be solved, and just as often had the answer been—repeat your sacrifices. It almost seemed to him as if he had been made a victim of cunning priestcraft—as though the gods had no hand in the game. However, these ideas were but shortlived, for the belief of his people, that the gods determined all earthly matters, held even him firmly bound. So he continued offering sacrifices, without appeasing the gods. His power seemed on the wane since that fatal day, on which a snake, darting from a column in his castle, had frightened him out of his wits. Had he, perchance, nursed a false friend on his bosom? He scarcely dared think of it.

But he knew his Romans. Should he succeed in taking Ardea, his power would be strengthened. If he failed, well, then—. The treasury was empty—the people wanted to live. He shook his head in doubt. Then his star was surely setting. And the Carthaginians of whom he expected so much, had then surely arrived at the wrong time. Now that they were here, all must be risked, was he to win.

We started as if waking from a nightmare.

Hadn't the tent covering moved? Or did he really see apparitions? He glanced suspiciously toward the entrance.

"Oh, it is you, Collatinus! Come nearer. What's new in camp, and where is Sextus?"

"Gone to Rome, your majesty!"

"Again to Rome. Hang his skirt chasing! Always thinking of women! But go on!"

"The soldiers are muttering about the slender fare and want to leave for home. The allies refuse to perform guard duties and demand to know what duty binds them to the camp, since Rome declared this war without just cause. Still more——"

"By Pluto and all the infernals! Hold your tongue, you stupid boy. Since when is the king accountable to his subjects for his acts? He commands—the people obey. I shall command a flogging for the dogs, if they do not cease grumbling. The soldier eats what is set before him and enjoys his life and that he has a king.

"However, what other news is there? Are you, too, dissatisfied with the king, Collatinus?"

"I am a Roman and do my duty. But it is

hard for a soldier to fight, when his heart rebels at it and he is starved besides.

"Neither plunder nor the acquisition of another's lands make a people happy, if at home the soil remains untilled and debts overtake the citizen. Promises of rewards no longer fool the soldier, since the veterans of other wars walk the streets of Rome in tatters, without the least attention. The warrior must, above all things, be a freeman, shall he do honor to his country.

"The whole army refuses longer to be used as land robbers. Besides, the soldier demands that he be led against real enemies of his country, and not against peace-loving neighbors, whose wealth is their only crime. That's the universal opinion in the camp."

"By Pluto and all the infernals! I will show these Plebeians that I am their king. And these Patricians, who pride themselves on their blue blood and want to be above the ordinary, shall also be disciplined. These bean and pumpkin raisers are the instigators, as usual. Too bad, I failed to exterminate the whole brood, instead of killing only a few hundred of them. Then the people would live

content. And I may do it yet. Let the treaty with Carthage be concluded, and the remaining senators may have their tombs on the Appian way put in order. The senate house shall be used for stabling horses. That will abate the nuisance of these senatorial asses. The hall of the people next to it is the proper place for the ox-mart. That will drown the bleating of the lambs. Why let the people think, while the king thinks for all? As if Tarquin cared a straw for the hallowed traditions of your idiotic forefathers! Their Rome was good enough for them. They loved the stench of the open sewers. To-day no one would think of it. The people are become modern, because I am a modern king and not the master of a pig-pen. As if I needed the senate's or people's assistance to rule them!

"What do they say about me generally, Collatinus? Call me uncle!"

"Nothing flattering, Uncle. The Patricians call you haughty, cruel. They are without exception cringing hypocrites — not real friends — though they humbly bow before you. The Plebeians at first believed you the peo-

ple's friend. To-day they call you tyrant, because they know their fate does not concern you. You must not count on love, when fear alone established your power. Beware, that the weapons which you put into the people's hands may not be turned against you. The Romans are fickle and will follow him who offers them most. They have tested you and caught you in lies. A new leader may come soon. Even now the priests are prophesying the event, and the Roman believes them, whether he dwells in villa or Suburra."

Tarquin began to think. He meditated that if the Carthaginians failed to see his weakness, all might yet go well. And against this contingency he had provided. So long as Brutus was their keeper, they were in good hands. This idiot was at least honest and reliable. But then he was too stupid to understand public opinion. And that was, perhaps, the reason for his silence about the matters which Collatinus had just mentioned.

Quintus, the Plebeian leader, was his friend. He had secured him by cheap favors. And Quintus had not said a word about it. Was

he, too, in ignorance of these matters? Or——?

Then there was Lucretius, Collatinus' father-in-law, whom he had but recently appointed prefect of the city. He, too, had kept his silence.

Numa, the Pontifex, tasted of the offered sacrifices and spoke unctuously of things divine. He was not in touch with the people.

Could it be possible that these men had deceived him, or was Collatinus lying? He would soon know the truth.

Oh, this Sibyl, with her cursed books! Had he never seen her! Perhaps she made no special reference to him and he was needlessly excited. Such thoughts coursed wildly through his brain.

Collatinus left the king's tent, apparently to follow his camp duties, in fact to apprise his fellow conspirators of the effect his words had on Tarquin. A great change had taken place with the king, he reported to the initiated ones, who whispered it from tent to tent. And while the king was forging plans how he could best take the town, rumor was fast spreading in camp that Tarquin need not expect aid from Carthage.

"To-morrow Ardea will be mine," dreamed the king.

"To-morrow we shall march to Rome!" cried his joyous soldiers.

The moon shed her mild light upon the camp; occasionally a horse would whinny, when the guards were relieved. Thus passed the night.

IX.

Sextus and his friends had meanwhile reached the city and were storming through the gates like a whirlwind. Citizens and playing children fled the streets in terror, as the wild ones hurried past them on their horses.

Sextus boldly shook his curly head, still bolder did he greet the maidens who enjoyed his favor and proudly displayed their admiration for the noble youth. In this way they had raced through the city, to halt their rearing horses before the temple of Vesta.

The venerable Claudia, for years the prioress of the temple, hastened the virgins to the inner living rooms, when she heard the well-known voice of Sextus. There alone did she deem them safe from the impetuous sprig of royalty. Her own age and already wrinkled face were ample proof against all blandishments.

"Hey, there, old hag!" Sextus called to her, "Again you have driven your young brood to shelter. Your virtuous care is quite preten-

tious, jealous witch. May Pluto take me, if the goddess enjoys your shriveled face. Feed the eternal fire and think of the conquest of your youth. Numa, the sanctimonious fox, who grows fat partaking of the sacrificial wines and meats, knows how the gods beget sons. However, he has tried his art in vain on you, sterile flower of virtue! Far better and safer to retain virtue, than to be buried alive!

"Look, there he peeps again from behind his garden hedge. Tell him, Claudia, that your chastity has conquered, and not to despair of you, who at bedtime faithfully loosen his sandals, since corpulency prevents him from looking beyond his god-like pouch.

"By Pluto, old fox, hide yourself in the Regia and blister your knees in useless prayers to the gods. Falsify the annals and tell the stupid believers how many hairs Jupiter grows on his head, and whither the sacrificial wines disappear. But leave the virgins alone, for nowadays no one but a dunce believes it any longer that a Vestal virgin may bear divine twins without extraneous help.

"See, see, now he runs away and Claudia,

too. They cannot hear the truth. Apropos, my grandfather, the good king Priscus, had a weakness for the maidens of Vesta. Even in his lifetime rumor had it that Servius was his bastard child, born of a Vestal, who, of course, claimed to have conceived of a god with beautiful auburn hair. This god, the maiden claimed, had visited her in the temple. Well, Priscus had a fine crop of red hair, too, and looked withal like Mars, our god of war. Without doubt this auburn hair bewitched my grandmother and made her kind toward Servius. Faith, if it doesn't seem to me that women always deify the man they love, especially if he has red hair. Never forget this, ye daring sons of Mars!"

With that he gave his horse the spurs, and the others quickly followed, laughing boisterously, as he turned into the well-trodden road leading to the tavern kept by Marcus Bibulus.

Marcus, the obliging keeper of the house, was profuse in his greetings, as they dismounted in the courtyard and threw the bridles to the waiting slaves with an oath.

"Wine, Marcus, and bring it quickly, great bulwark of kingly Rome, but do not wobble

at the knees as though you had no marrow in your bones. Tell Julia to come, too, that I may embrace her. The wench may be proud to have me for a friend. The goddess Vesta sustained a grievous loss, when Julia remained a tavern-keeper's daughter."

Marcus was meanwhile rummaging among his wine bags, till he had found the right label.

"So, there is my best from Tusculum," he puffed, "the only one fit for great lords."

The youths threw themselves carelessly on wooden benches and the drinking was on.

"First come we," said Sextus, "and then the gods." With that he drained his cup and the others did likewise.

"Never fear, we are safe from Brutus to-day," Sextus continued. "This ass, whom my father, the king, for some unknown reason, appointed Tribune of the body guard, is very fond of mingling in other people's affairs. To-day he cannot do it, for he has visitors. Two of these Carthaginian sneaks, who are called diplomats and who conclude treaties, are his guests, and may find it hard to enjoy his tiresome company. However, it's a good omen and we will enjoy a glorious night.

"The gods be praised, that true Roman wenches always prefer the warrior to these sickly pale faces, who, with scented clothes and perfumed hair, strut about the Forum and the Circus." With that he drained his cup the second time.

Julia, the well-shaped daughter of the house, appeared this very moment in the door, bearing a plate of radishes, bread and salt. Her jet black eyes rested lovingly on Sextus, whom she greeted with a smile. Putting his arm about her waist, he drew her toward him on the seat, where she submitted to his advances without blush or objection.

"Wine, Julia, quickens the fire of love. Have some of mine; it guards against wrinkles and old age. But now you may go, or your father, the old fool, might believe that he is about to become a king's relation.

"More wine, Marcus, and be off! What ails you, Valerius, that you look so melancholy of a sudden? By Jupiter, if you don't look like one of the long-haired philosophers, who loaf about the Forum, pestering the people with new ideas. Or has a dark-eyed maiden, perchance, turned your head?"

"Sextus," answered he, "neither woman nor this hateful war with Ardea could distress me thus. But you know my father. He believes all is over with Rome, since the senate is no longer consulted about the welfare of the people. And now he prophesies to me this many a day that the king exceeded the bounds of his power, when he upset the honored traditions of his country. I tell you, Sextus, there is something brewing against the king. A dreadful conspiracy exists among the Patri-cians. The people are in a dangerous mood. All feel the heavy taxes, the peasant neglects his fields, the workmen clamor for employment and bread. Methinks, I see dissatisfied, gloomy faces on all sides. And yet, we revel in luxury. You understand, Sextus, that the Valerians are loyal to your cause, but I scent treason, without being able to find its source."

"Imagination, Valerius! Nothing but fancies of your fevered brain! Have some more wine, it cools! Your father is an honest man, but of the old school, and finds it hard to adjust himself to present conditions. Who dares oppose the king? The Plebeians know what he has done for the city. What would Rome

be to-day, had he not dug it out of the Patrician mire? I fancy, it is no small matter to unite into a compact nation people so promiscuously thrown together. True, he has removed his enemies, curbed the power of the senate and made the nobles toe the mark. Had he not done so then, would he be king to-day? There must be equality among the subjects, if the ruler's work shall prosper. He who would enjoy the benefits of a well-regulated state must not mind the cost. Shall the poor alone bear all the burdens, while the rich enjoy only privileges? That would please the Patricians. In this manner they used to rule. They are longing for it again. And that is what they call government by the people—liberty. Then it was: Who are the people? The Patricians, of course. And whom do the Patricians rule? The Plebeians, of course. Let them curse and clench their fists! The king's ax is sharpened for the fray. Let him come forward who wants a taste of it.

"There's where the Carthaginians differ. They go right ahead gathering wealth, while our mossbacks talk of nothing but the good old times. What was there, then, about this

good old time, that they should praise it so? Was it, perhaps, the open gutters and fever-laden ditches in which pigs and geese frolicked? Or the fairy tales of Rhea Silvia and her god-begotten twins, one of whom slew the other for a trifle? Or, perhaps, the timeworn story of Numa Pompilius, visiting the divine Egeria in her cool retreat, for sacred confab—and nothing else? Or may not a city extend its walls, merely because the forefathers believed it to be sinful? The young world wants to grow and the old ones, already great, think this wrong. Rome must take Carthage for an example, or our boasted civilization will end in failure. We want to expand, subjugate nations and become powerful, even as our Jupiter. This is Rome's manifest destiny. Do not think for an instant that my father enters into a treaty with Carthage for pastime. Not at all! We can only become great by closer acquaintance with this great nation, perhaps gain sufficient strength in time to gather in the whole of Carthage and all her tremendous wealth. This is the intention of the Tarquinians.

“Your eyesight must be very poor, indeed,

if you cannot see it, Valerius! What do you say now? However, I trust that both of you can keep these secrets of state, for only friendship induced me to betray the king's intentions."

"Well said, Sextus, but nevertheless it is the intended treaty with Carthage which the Romans fear. They are still true to the warning of the ancients, to beware of entangling alliances. Even you must admit that we owe our present greatness in a measure to this wise principle of the fathers. The mountains and the ocean are Rome's natural boundaries. Whenever it shall go beyond, the state will perish. The people of Carthage are shrewd merchants and money changers, the descendants of cunning orientals. What do they know of art and the sciences? A nation whose highest ideal it is to acquire wealth and conquer weaker peoples has a low standard of civilization. Has Carthage ever done more than this? A people who worship cruel gods are themselves cruel. If you call that civilization, to oppress the weak, then a Numidian lion should stand upon the ramparts of the Capitol, for the lion as well lives upon weaker

animals, and yet we do not claim for him a higher civilization on that account. He devours lambs because he is hungry and finds their flesh palatable.

"Besides, we are warned against the treacherous paw of Carthage. They do not seek a treaty without having an object in view. There is some advantage to be gained by them. Or do you believe that Carthage would ever sacrifice a ship for Rome? Not I. The king should have consulted the senate in this matter, and the people would have regained confidence in him. His power would have been strengthened. Now they say the Carthaginian treaty is merely intended to frighten the Ardeans and to break the Latin league. That accomplished, Tarquin means to turn Rome into an hereditary monarchy.

"Should this be true, let me tell you, Sextus, that the Romans are not ready for it. They will shed their blood to the last drop, rather than give up their ancient rights. Roman independence shall never be the price for Carthage's friendship. According to our traditions, your father is even to-day not king of Rome. The people have never named,

the senate has never confirmed him. I see, though, that my rehashing of old history displeases you. So I'll say no more. It shall never interfere with our friendship, at all events.

"Come on, Sextus, drink a cup to our friendship and health! Let us rather think of the women. These tiresome political problems do not bother them and they enjoy the company of jolly good fellows.

"What do you think of Lucretia? She alone seems an exception to the rule, and, heart-breaker though you are, even you cannot alienate her affections from Collatinus."

Sextus had been disagreeably touched by Valerius' manner and speech, and it was with an effort that he concealed his ruffled feelings. Was it his concern that many were displeased with his father? His mother's reputation concerned him still less. She was neither better nor worse than most Roman dames, whom she eclipsed only by her position. And yet, no one was permitted to mention these and kindred matters in his presence, least of all, if they concerned his blood relations. He had but recently whipped a Plebeian, because

the fellow had taken the time, while working on the racecourse, to call him "royal bastard" and that at the very moment when he was about to show some ladies of his acquaintance his mastery with the horse. The constant whisperings of the rabble, when he mixed among the promenaders in the Forum, disgusted him. And yet his free and easy manner, which brushed aside the laws of etiquette, religious customs and stiff diplomatic usages, had made him many friends, who longed for the time when Sextus would be king. Not one of them, however, lived in that state of restless expectancy which had seized Sextus since he knew that Tullia had fixed upon her youngest son for a successor.

"Forget your whims, Sextus," Titus Fabius now called to him. "What do we all care for such idle gossip? We know you and are your friends. Here's to your health! And now sing us your favorite song, while yet the fiery wine courses through your veins. You know the one I mean:

"The Virgin Rhea bore a son

Whose father was a cuckoo, etc."

A broad smile played about his lips, when

Sextus, whose jolly nature had regained the upper hand, rose in his seat and filled his cup.

"Ask me all else, but not to sing that song," he replied, "or Marcus, over there, might be unable to restrain his laughter and burst, like a full wine bag.

"Hey, there, Marcus, bring more wine and save your bows for Jupiter. Once I am king, you shall be my cup-bearer. Julia, too, shall be provided for, the same as all the good-looking Plebeian girls in the Suburra who cared for me while I was but a prince. And if you do not care to be my cup-bearer, Marcus, I shall name you Pontifex, in place of the sleek Numa, who already has enough to get along without pension. The Vestal virgins will tickle you to death with their hairpins. merely to find out if wine flows from the same cask into which you have poured full many a bag, ha, ha, ha!"

Marcus was still tittering long after he had comfortably seated himself in his corner. He meant to earn enough to-day to have his measure taken for a bordered toga. Closing his eyes in a dreamy fashion, he saw himself ennobled, admired by the Plebeians, envied by

the Patrician families. Hereafter he would pay visits in a litter. Even now he heard the cries of the preceding slaves: "Room to the noble Marcus, ye citizens, the Pontifex is on his way to offer sacrifices!" Thinking of all these possibilities, he had meanwhile really dropped asleep. A contented smile rested on his fat face, and piously his chubby hands were clasped over his well-rounded belly. Thus he sat there, when Sextus espied him.

"See Valerius, and you, Titus, how easy it is to make a Plebeian happy. He has now dreamed a thousand times that he is being carried about in the senatorial robes, perhaps that he is already minister in the king's cabinet. See, how he smiles. He beholds himself dressed in the pointed cap and purple robes of the Pontifex Maximus, the exclusive companion of the gods. Should he awake a disappointed mortal, well, there is still left to him the hope of becoming a king's cup-bearer. In the end, after a thousand disappointments and deceptions in life, he probably dies the proprietor of a Roman tavern. Like him is the great multitude—always fed on empty promises, whether king or the Patricians rule the land.

Here in Rome they have built the rabble a sheep-pen, the *Ovilia*, where the common herd may vote, without, however, knowing that they have no voice in government. The Plebeians will always remain like a lion who fails to measure his strength. Should they ever awake, where would be the kings—the Patricians? However, to avert this we have our college of Pontifices with all their dogmas. They assist the people to dream the eternal dream of the gods, which makes them content with their fate. I tell you both, we must stand together, if the people are not to awake.”

It was already growing dark, and Julia brought lighted lamps.

“See, my little witch,” said Sextus to her, “the old man sleeps again. His unconquerable ambition always makes him sleepy. Or should the wine alone be able to do it?”

“Julia, you pearl of the Suburra, we shall let him sleep and keep house together. I fetched you a bracelet and a flask of sweet scented oil from Greece. Your cherry face is not disfigured by the beauty plasters worn by our aristocratic ladies, who pass whole forenoons with their hairdress and their fingernails. You

shall shine in the circus to-morrow, all Rome shall know you are my favorite. Do you hear, Julia? You shall sit on the Patrician benches whether they like it or no. It suffices that Sextus has commanded it."

With that he presented her the promised toilet articles, which she eagerly took hold of, running with them toward the door, nimble as a cat. Sextus after her.

His friends looked at one another in utter surprise. Was their artful game to fail? Was it possible that Sextus preferred a common Plebeian wench to the divine Lucretia? Collatinus had remained in camp, to give his knowing friends a chance to spur on Sextus, until he would, in his madness, dare make his friend's home the scene of his unconquerable lust. It was the intention of the conspirators to surprise him there, raise an alarm, and, using the occasion, drive the people to revolt against their king. It was known that Sextus loved Lucretia to distraction, and since it had ever been his principle that female virtue, like a castle, could always be taken by the daring, the conspirators believed he would swallow the bait, if Collatinus remained behind in

camp. And now, heated by the wine, he idled away his time with the amorous daughter of a Plebeian. Already the friends began to fear that all would end in failure and that they could hardly count on a sudden revolt of the people. Their senses had become benumbed from wine, and the heat, until at last, tired of waiting for the runaway, they fell soundly asleep.

* * * * *

"Let them sleep, Julia, and when they awake, tell them that Sextus has gone to Collatia, to console the beautiful Lucretia," Sextus whispered to the girl, when both appeared in the door and found the friends stretched full length on the benches and snoring.

The people who had assembled in the Forum to listen to Barbatus cast shy glances at the lone horseman, who, wrapped in his cloak, galloped along the Via Sacra in an easterly direction.

"Surely a messenger from Ardea," whispered one of the auditors to his neighbor.

"Again this confounded Barbatus with his loose tongue," muttered Sextus, as he recognized the orator.

X.

Quintus Barbatus was just in the midst of one of his usual powerful tirades, when Sisenna, the master of the stone-cutters, interrupted him.

"Since when have you turned against the king, Barbatus, and gone over to the Patricians? So long as your guild was allowed to furnish Tarquin war supplies and locks, you always howled for him. Methinks your patriotism rests entirely on self-interest."

Barbatus was visibly provoked to be thus interrupted, but without showing any confusion he retorted: "Citizens of Rome! Sisenna is unfeeling like the stone he chisels. Since he has furnished the columns for the porticos of the Forum, he thinks he has acquired intelligence. The stone stairway to the Capitol, which he constructed, has completely robbed him of all common sense, if he ever had any. The burdens of the people do not bother him."

The rabble laughed at this sally, and Sis-

enna hurried from the Forum, followed by their ribald jests.

Barbatus then resumed his talk.

"You all know how many sacrifices the people have already laid upon the altar of this royal Moloch. Not to mention the blood of the flower of our youth, which has soaked the battlefields, you, the fathers, were compelled by Tarquin to perform menial service to carry out the whims of his disordered brain.

"Who sustains the king? The people!

"Who built the temples? The people!

"Who dug the sewers and constructed the circus? Ask your callous hands!

"Who starved that the great ones might revel in abundance? Again the people!

"And pray, what has Tarquin ever done for you? He promised you a share of the lands taken from the enemy. Whatever he himself did not retain, he presented to his friends. He promised you a reduction in the price of food stuffs. His friends alone enjoy the monopoly of furnishing these to you. And you pay dearly for them. He promised you general prosperity, and at home your children cry for bread, which the father cannot bring

them, unless he signs away his very birth-right to the rich—or unless he steals it!”

“How about the new colonies, Barbatus?” someone shouted.

“Oh, yes, he founded colonies when he commenced to fear the people—and now he and his friends rule and ruin them the best they can. The road to his throne is paved with the lost liberty of the Roman people—the blood of your sons has cemented it.

“And now, when he has come to believe that the free citizens of Rome have been turned by him into an army of abject slaves, he intends to establish an hereditary monarchy. Sextus, well known to all of you as a libertine, who shines at the gaming table and on the race-course, is his designated successor. Were you asked if it was agreeable to the people? Did he inquire of the senate, as to the confirmation of the fathers? Nothing of the kind. Nor will you be asked, since he assumes that with the plunder of Ardea he can buy you, like so many cattle. And after you have been bought, you may do the king's bidding in the legislative hall, where confirmation is as-

sured. This far has it come with the Romans.

"Citizens of Rome! Do you want to be free as you once were, or slaves, which he will make you?"

"Down with the tyrant!" the rabble yelled. "We are and will remain free Roman citizens."

"Barbatus speaks the truth, him will we follow," shouted a laborer in whose face care and hunger had carved deep lines.

"Barbatus is a demagogue, ye citizens. Do not believe him, he is bribed by the Patricians," another one yelled, to be at once set upon and ill-treated by the vicious crowd.

"Down with the followers of the king! We will have kings no longer," was now shouted on all sides.

Barbatus commanded silence.

"Hear, hear, Barbatus has still more to tell us." At once the throng was quiet again.

"Fellow citizens," Barbatus continued, "in former days, when the Roman people still had a voice in government, the king could not conclude treaties without our sanction. To-day we are not asked to speak our mind as to this treaty with Carthage. And yet, their en-

voys are within the walls of Rome to conclude a friendly alliance with Tarquin.

"Who are these Carthaginians, that we should wish to have their friendship?

"They are barbarians and land robbers, who believe that the beginning and the end of all is wealth. They undertake everything to acquire riches. There is no perfidy too low, if by its use they expect to get half the earth within their claws. When their own land became too small for them, they hunted new dominions with their ships, where they appeared at first as friends, awaiting only the most propitious time, when they might subjugate the people. If the people defended themselves, they would not only rob them of their liberty, but of their possessions and life as well. In this manner has Carthage grown mighty, until to-day her rulers claim with pride that the sun never sets on her possessions.

"It never concerned these barbarians in the least that the sun of liberty did not shine any longer on the vanquished peoples. It was the will of their great god, whom they call Hercules, that this had come to pass. That, at

least, was the wise opinion of their priests—a shabby pretense to excuse their own injustice. They sacrifice innocent babes to their other god, Moloch. Since a portion of the people have enriched themselves by the robbery of weaker nations, the rich ones among them no longer offer their own children to this cruel god, but purchase the sacrifices of the poor, or rob them from the strangers. But recently a coppersmith, just arrived from Messina, was barely able to describe to me their outrages in Sicily.

“This contemptible pack of traders is the one with which the king is about to conclude a treaty—nay, has concluded one long ago—without asking senate and people. Shall the free Roman learn the shameless deeds of Carthage, and, after they are learned, imitate them? May Jupiter forbid! We are no barbarians, land robbers, slayers of nations, nor do we aspire to this doubtful honor. Rome’s strength has long been acknowledged and honored by the tribes of Italy. Shall we sacrifice our liberty, destroy our power, by joining hands with perfidious Carthage? Even now this cunning pack of traders drives our

merchants to the wall. What will they do after the treaty is concluded?

"I say it openly, we need a change in government, if Rome's venerable traditions are to live.

"Citizens of Rome! The time for action is at hand. Long since have you tired of this life of slavish drudgery. Or do you intend to wait till you are placed in iron fetters? Then it will be too late.

"Let '*Sic semper tyrannis!*' be our parole, and when you hear it, collect about the standards. Then will break the dawn of liberty, a new Rome shall arise upon the ruins of the reign of tyranny, your children will ever commemorate the day on which Rome's citizens declared their independence, and from the heights of the Capitol Jupiter will watch the welfare of the state!" Thus he concluded his oration.

"Well said, Barbatus, but what better things have we to expect of the Patricians?" someone shouted in the front row.

"They will grant us right and justice, Scipio, equal liberty within the state and with themselves. This much Barbatus promises. Are you satisfied?"

"*Sic semper tyrannis!* Down with the kings! Away with Carthage! We want liberty, equality and fraternity within the state," came as an answer from all sides.

"Lead us, Barbatus! We want arms and bread, Barbatus," some of the bolder ones howled.

The orator lifted his hand again and commanded silence.

"Rome has extended to the envoys the hospitality of the city and will protect their persons. That is common usage among civilized nations. Promise me not to harm them."

At this moment the rabble would gladly have promised everything. Did they not have Barbatus' word for it that equality should accompany the change?

"We promise. Long live Barbatus, the people's friend!" the multitude roared.

Barbatus issued secret orders to his confidants concerning their conduct on the coming day, then he adjourned the meeting.

Peace-loving citizens suspiciously shook their heads. Where was Lucretius, the prefect of the city, and Brutus, the Tribune of the body guard, both of whom had sworn loyalty to Tarquin?

Long past the midnight hour roving bands roamed through the narrow streets of the Suburra, shouting hoarsely: "Liberty, equality! Long live the republic!" in their drunken valor.

At last all Rome was sound asleep. Only in the temple of Vesta and in the Regia light was still burning. Now and then the chattering of the sacred geese, who were awakened from their slumbers, was heard from the Capitol. All else was quiet.

Numa had convened the college of the Pontifices, apparently for the early matins, but in reality to apprise his followers of the developments in the political sky.

He sat there in his purple robes, the pointed woolen cap with the tassel on his head, surrounded in a semi-circle by Pansa, the Flamen of Jupiter, Numitor, the high priest of Mars, and Virginius, who led the service of the Lupercals. These three formed, as it were, the cabinet of the Pontifex Maximus, with his many holidays, sacrificial customs, dogmas of the faith, and divine rewards and punishments. At their sides were the priests of lesser degree, in many-colored, fantastic

dress, awaiting with fear and veneration the words that Numa might utter.

At last he cleared his throat and intoned with a nasal twang the customary prayer, imploring divine inspiration. Then he said:

"It hath pleased almighty Jupiter in his inscrutable wisdom to make known to his servant Numa, the will of the gods, which is, to abolish the kingdom in his greatest dominion upon the earth. Inspired, therefore, by the heavenly spirit, we decree and order, in the name of Jupiter, that Tarquinius Superbus be stripped and shorn of all claims and rights to the throne, and that he be exiled without the boundaries of the state with his family and all his adherents. Jupiter hath turned from him because of his many iniquities committed against the people, and the land, and hath ordained that citizen of Rome for a ruler who hath pleased him most.

"A miracle will be wrought, and all of you shall know and proclaim him first Consul of the republic. The Romans will confirm your choice. Tarquinius desecrated the service of the gods when he undertook to perform the hallowed mysteries himself. After him no

magistrate shall ever desecrate the holy ceremonies. This is Jupiter's will. Whoever shall believe otherwise, let him be accursed!"

The priesthood stood amazed, looking incredulously at one another. Jupiter—displeased with Tarquin, the great and mighty king, to whom alone Rome was indebted for its many splendid temples! Inscrutable are the ways of the gods, if they thus punish him, who has paid most homage to them! None could comprehend it. And yet, it must be true, since Numa had declared it, for he was infallible, and ever in close communion with the gods.

Numa had risen, and glanced immovably upward, from whence the eternal stars, the guards of the gods, watch the daily life of mortal man.

"See, he speaks to the gods again, Pansa," whispered Numitor, and motioned the priests to step aside.

It was a moment full of tension and solemnity, which held the spectators in awe. The eyes of all hung expectantly upon the lips of the chief Pontifex, but they remained closed, thus only increasing the tension, which slowly took hold of the priesthood.

Just then a rooster crowed and proclaimed the break of day. A gentle thrill convulsed Numa's frame and at last his lips parted, and he spoke:

"Hast thou brought with thee the Sibyl's holy books, Pansa?"

"Aye, your holiness!"

"Then bring them forth, and read to me their fatal sayings."

With trembling hand Pansa unwrapped the sacred rolls, and commenced reading:

"Jupiter, the thunderer, to Amalthæa, beloved daughter of the gods!

"I have shorn of power the haughty, the cruel. Rome shall be ruled by him that is lowly and weak of mind. I alone am mighty.

"The people shall rule and increase my power upon the earth.

"Woe be to them if they leave my altars! I will put brother against brother, rich against poor, strong against weak, master against servant. And barbarians shall burn my desecrated city and take my Romans slaves.

"Woe unto Saturn! Woe unto Hercules!

Their altars are destroyed, their sacrifices are no more. Carthage lies desolate and vanquished. My Romans have destroyed her power, ravished her daughters, enslaved her men.

"False gods have wandered westward and raised false hopes among my people. Conquest has made my Romans bloodthirsty and cruel. Wealth has made my people cowards and murderers. Crime is committed in my name and honor. Virtue is decried. Vice triumphs. Rome is ruled by sneaks and cowards.

"A race of monsters shall rise and rule degenerate Rome. The people shall rule no more, and envy shall slay the strong. Their wealth shall be the people's curse. Murder and incest, debauchery and perfidy, shall be the order of the day. Venal shall be rulers and people. Art will decay, riches alone shall govern. Money will be their only god. Woe unto candor, honesty!

"Woe is me! My rule is gone.

"Degenerate man shall follow a crucified slave. And slavery shall subjugate the weaklings."

"Enough, Pansa, read no more. I shudder at the fate of Rome," cried Numa in a terrified voice. Again his eyes looked upward to the stars, then he slowly spoke:

"Romulus, son of god, god, begotten of Mars by Rhea Silvia, thy immaculate servant, what cruel fate has overtaken thy eternal city!

"Oh, Rome, thou queen of the earth, how great has been thy fall!

"I see the pillars of the Forum besmeared with the blood of thy citizens, and crumbling away in ruins; city and country laid waste by cruel barbarians; Roman turned against Roman in unholy strife; liberty trodden under foot, the people degenerate and poisoned by the unspeakable vices of the east; virtue derided, justice perverted, the noblest men, the purest women, far from home and native land, exiled by a vicious rabble.

"The masters have separated from the people, to end their misspent lives in luxury and indolence. Deserted are the altars of the gods! Lonely wanders my spirit among the ruins of former greatness. . . .

"City of the seven hills, I see thy power

taken from thee! A false priest rules and enslaves my Romans and the subjugated provinces from beyond the Tiber. A treacherous wind from mount Vaticanus blows the false teachings of a foreign god over the fields of the earth, saturated with the blood of man. .

"Gone is the senate! The goat picks her scanty meal upon the ruins of the spacious halls in which the wise ones counseled. . .

"A brood of cowardly prattlers has grown upon the tree of a false science of the gods; all the earth is steeped in corruption. . . .

"Carthage is no more!

"Rome is no more!

"Jupiter is no more!

"The symbol of slavery is become ruler, and begets untold millions of slaves upon the earth.

"Jupiter, where is thy temple?

"And ye, eternal associates of the godhead, Juno and Minerva, where are ye?

"Rome's gods have perished with her people!"

Numa uttered a terrible cry, as of one in mortal pain. Then he awoke.

"Where are the Sibyl's sacred books,

Pansa?" . . . Guard them . . . in the deepest . . . retreat . . . of the . . . Capitol. . . . They truly . . . contain . . . Rome's . . . fate." . . . He had spoken these words between spasms of pain. When he ended, a deadly pallor crept over his countenance, then a thrill convulsed his frame and he fell backwards. The Pontifex was no more. Gently the priests lifted him into his chair. All were most profoundly moved by his prophetic words, and sudden demise.

Numitor was the first one to regain his speech.

"Brethren," he commenced, "Numa spoke *ex cathedra*, and it behooves us to add the words of the holy man unto our dogmas. May their terrible meaning be a warning to future generations. . . . The people shall never learn what has happened this eventful night."

"Tell them that Numa should not outlive the kingdom of Rome. Jupiter, in his kindness, took him to himself. The Romans will choose a new Pontifex," added Pansa.

"And now go to your temples and wait till

Jupiter shall give a sign. Numa truly had a vision. . . . Jupiter's will be done!" Virginius had spoken.

The morning dawn painted the eastern sky a golden hue, as the priests left the Regia, deep sorrow in their hearts.

Claudia, too, wept many a bitter tear, as she prepared the lifeless body for the tomb. She had loved him so. . . .

* * * * *

XI.

It was at sunrise, when two men turned their sweat-covered horses into the shady path leading to the villa of Collatinus. The same messenger had called both.

Collatinus, one of the men, looked perturbed and with serious misgivings toward the entrance. In his hands he convulsively held a crumpled parchment. The writing was Lucretia's.

"Come quickly with a faithful friend, a terrible event has taken place," he had read, repeatedly. What could have happened? He looked imploringly at Brutus, whom he had brought with him, but his face, as if carved out of stone, only looked more pallid and ferocious than ever. Neither did his look betray what transpired within his heart. He dismounted in a careless manner and handed the tearful slave the bridle.

"Don't be a child, Collatinus, and stop trembling like a poor sinner. True, it may be possible that we have not mistaken Sextus.

Perhaps, the negligence of your friends has permitted a terrible crime to happen which we intended to avert. Whatever may have happened, though, do not forget, that Rome's liberation from the rule of tyrants is involved. Should this cause you, personally, a great injury, pray forget it, be a patriot."

They had now reached the entrance.

"Junius, I shall never forget my part in your conspiracy, if Lucretia has become a victim of our zeal. Have you no heart for the misfortune of your sorrowing friend? Do state and personal revenge overshadow all?

"But where is my Lucretia?

"Formerly, when the husband rode into his courtyard, she would always come to meet him. Is she sick—or dead?" His hand trembled as he unlocked the door.

His faithful slaves threw themselves at their feet in the Vestibulum, loudly lamenting the great misfortune.

"Mercy, lord, we cannot help it that our good mistress is sick," the gray servants of the house cried in their anguish.

Collatinus motioned them affectionately to go about their usual work.

The clatter of horses was now heard in front of the house, and hardly had the friends time to remove their cloaks, when the door opened and Lucretius entered with Publius Valerius, the father of the young man in whose company Sextus had left for Rome the previous day.

"By Jupiter, you here, too, Collatinus? What has happened, and where is Lucretia, my child? Let us go to her."

Taking him by the arm, both went ahead. Brutus and Valerius followed in silence.

Lucretia sat in her boudoir, in deep distress, shedding bitter tears at the sight of husband and father.

"What ails you, my beloved wife, that you cry so bitterly?" asked Collatinus, embracing her.

"Do not touch me, Collatinus, my honor is gone. The traces of another man are in your bed. But be assured, the body only is desecrated. The soul is pure.

"Sextus Tarquinius poorly requited my hospitality, when he subdued his lust with unsheathed sword."

Then she recounted how he ravished her.

Collatinus cried aloud, the gray-haired father and Valerius, benumbed by the blow, looked in vain for words of comfort.

Brutus alone shed no tears.

Lucretia had risen from her couch and stood before the men, like a goddess of vengeance.

"If you are Romans, he will have justice," she cried in her anguish. "As for me, I do not wish to survive my misfortune. No woman shall ever appeal to the name of Lucretia to retain her dishonored life."

Saying which, she thrust the knife which was held concealed beneath her garment into her heart, and fell dying on the floor.

While all gave way to unspeakable grief, Brutus drew the knife, dripping with blood, from the wound, causing her heart-blood to spout forth like a flowing brook. Holding it high, he shrieked with mighty voice:

"If you are Romans, stop your weeping? It is meet for men to act.

"The hour of liberty has tolled. Spirit of the Junians, descend and help me destroy Rome's tyrannical rule!

"Swear with me:

"By this blood, guiltless despite the pollu-

tion of royal villainy, I swear, and call ye, oh gods, to witness, that I shall pursue Lucius Tarquinius, the despot, his wicked wife and all of his tribe, with fire, sword and all other means henceforth in my power, nor shall I ever suffer him or any other king in Rome!" All took the oath.

The peaceful smile of a dying woman blessed Brutus' words. A last look from her breaking eye had roused the men from grief, and turned their minds upon revenge.

Carried away and inflamed by the new spirit which ruled Brutus, they all swore over the lifeless body of Lucretia to help destroy the reign of kings.

The news of the terrible event was spread quickly throughout the city. A messenger, whom Brutus sent, carried it to Rome.

The strange and shocking features of the deed brought the citizens of both places together, sooner than was expected. The people were beyond themselves, all sins and crimes of the Tarquinians were passed from mouth to mouth, and the anger of the Collatians knew no bounds when the body, imbedded in flowers, was borne to the market-

place by faithful slaves. All lamented most bitterly the royal villainy. Indescribable was the father's grief, as he bewailed his childless age.

Among them wandered Brutus, as if cast in bronze, chiding their tears and useless lamentations.

"Act as it becomes men and Romans! Take up your arms against those who have shown themselves your enemies," he repeatedly shouted into the multitude. The most courageous already volunteered their services, others followed their example, and very soon the marketplace presented a war-like aspect.

"Down with the tyrants! Down with the king!" was their watchword.

Brutus commanded silence.

"Listen to me, ye citizens of Collatia!" he shouted, "and swear that you will not needlessly shed another's blood. We do not wish to desecrate our holy cause with acts worthy of the Tarquinians.

"No harm shall befall a Roman citizen. The king is at Ardea. He shall never return to Rome. Exiled and outlawed, he shall live among strangers. Thrust your swords into

the ground, and cry with me: 'Sic semper tyrannis!' " All followed with a will.

Brutus quickly gave his orders, and very soon the gates were manned. With the flower of his warriors he marched to Rome, where his arrival was already expected.

On the way he gave a hearty handshake to Collatinus.

"Do you see, my boy, you have lost your faithful wife by knavery—but Rome is free at last. The gods, in whose hands we are mere instruments, willed it, that this should happen."

Collatinus replied, crestfallen: "It is dishonorable for me to know that I have assisted in this cruel work, still more dishonorable for Rome, that her citizens, ignorant of the situation, should gratefully welcome a liberty hatched in the depth of night, and purchased with the blood of the noblest of Roman women. My Lucretia the price! Fic upon the rabble! The people say aye, and so be it, to all, when their passions are unchained, without knowing that perhaps they are but blindly led into perdition.

"Aye, Brutus, we may well call ourselves

with pride Rome's liberators, but we are and will ever remain the murderers of my Lucretia."

"Fiddlesticks, Collatinus! Sextus would have done it anyway, sooner or later. We should be thankful that he has done it now. The people will name you as associate Consul, and Lucretia is and will ever remain a saint, whose memory shall live among the people to the end of time.

"But yesterday I had a learned discussion on this point with Numa, the chief Pontifex, as to whether mortal man could sin without his will. And do you know what he told me?

"The mind alone can sin, not the body, he said, and when the will is absent, there can be no guilt. Therefore, your wife is now a saint, a martyr to the cause of liberty. That alone should console you. Sextus, however, is one of those degenerate dogs, who are brought forth by incest and whose fate it will ever be to drag their guilty heritage through a painful life. They are fit for all iniquity. For a fact, they cannot commit sin, since their perverted nature compels the vicious act. However, we will not busy ourselves with these in-

tricate questions, so long as we have our college of Pontifices, who gain their livelihood by looking into such mysteries. The principal thing is and always will be, that Rome will be free. It is of small account by what means the result has been accomplished."

Collatinus had neither the fanatic zeal of Brutus, nor yet his calculating nature, to still his conscience in this easy manner. And yet the horrid deed of Sextus alone sufficed to make him an ever willing tool. Then, also, honors awaited him in the new state. That, too, was consoling. . . .

With Brutus at the head, the armed column of the Collatians continued their march to Rome, breathing vengeance.

The terrible message had inflamed the minds like lightning, even in Rome. From all quarters of the city the people flocked to the Forum, where Quintus Barbatus recounted to them the whole occurrence, to its most horrid details.

"There, now, you see what this royal brood is good for! After they have despoiled your possessions, they desecrate your homes.

"Men of Rome, guard your wives! Fathers

of Rome, protect your daughters against such infamy, if but a spark of the good old stock lives in your nature!

"Woe to me, that I should live to see this day! Woe to you, if you shall tolerate this immoral crew of cowardly murderers to rule you another day!"

The Tuscan merchants who had their booths near by had securely locked them at the first report. They knew the pranks of the Roman rabble, when once unchained and hungry. They also knew how the rabble hated the foreign shopkeepers.

Even now they feared to share Tarquin's fate. Barbatus had his hands full to satisfy all questioners. All demanded arms. All were prepared to battle. But who should lead them on? The rabble laughed when Barbatus suggested Brutus' name.

"What, that idiot, who had but yesterday received the Carthaginians, should lead free Romans?" That couldn't be. And they were far from willing to die for the cause.

"Wait, Plebeians, Brutus may arrive any moment. A new spirit possesses him; he is another man than the one you know. My

reports are not to be doubted. All Collatia follows him and is enthused at his manly courage and eloquence.

"Wait till he arrives, and meantime harm no one. The great day of liberty shall not be desecrated by bloodshed. That is his wish."

A suppressed whisper was meanwhile making the rounds. Numa, the Pontifex, had died. Jupiter had called him suddenly last night, after he had prophesied from the books of the Sibyl Tarquin's downfall. The priests all said it, that Rome was to be free and that the people should name him as the first Consul whom a miracle of the gods would determine.

The faithful Romans folded their hands in reverent awe, and cast shy glances at the walls of the Capitol, the unconquerable stronghold of the greatest and best Jupiter. And so it was the will of the gods that Tarquin's power be shattered. That alone sufficed the people.

A corpulent man of small stature was now seen wending his way through the crowd. Idle curiosity had prompted him to know the cause of the commotion.

"See, see, there comes our Marcus," someone shouted. "What drove you thus early from your den, noble tavern-keeper of the Suburra?"

Marcus puffed from the exertion, because it was hard on him to walk so far in a stretch.

At last he said with his thin voice: "What is the matter here? All Rome seems to be in the Forum."

"And not in your tavern, you meant to say, you old miser. You think the Romans must drink your sour wine, whether they like it or no."

"You stupid flute-player! What do you know about it, to whom the aroma of wine or onions is the same. Sextus, the king's son, is one of my customers, if you want to know it," Marcus piped contemptuously and expanded his chest as well as he could.

"Oh, you mean Sextus, the ravisher of matrons, the seducer of girls, the great light of the racecourse," the other now retorted.

"What, seducer of girls! Who dares attack the honor of my Julia? Is it my fault that I am the father of a beautiful daughter, who is loved by a king's son?"

"Oh, Marcus, it was not meant that way. No one accuses you of being the cause of Julia's beauty. That would be rank calumny, little poodle dog."

"Hear, hear, Sextus loves Marcus' daughter Julia, and the stupid fool fails to know what that means. Well, well, so Sextus has also nested in the Suburra. Citizens, lock up your daughters or Sextus may love still more of them."

"No danger, we will clip his wings to-day. However, do you know, Marcus, that the Pontifex is dead?"

"Dead!" he piped again. "But yesterday he ordered two Amphoræ of my best. It cannot be true."

"Aye, aye, he is really dead."

Others confirmed it with serious mien. And now Marcus became more confidential.

"Listen, Agrippa, that would be a place for me. Let me tell you in all confidence, Sextus has already promised me the office, as soon as he is king. Now that it is vacant, I shall strive to obtain the sinecure at once. It is time that a Plebeian should have it. The Patricians all grow fat in it. You help me,

Agrippa, that the people propose my name at the election, and you shall have a whole bag full of gold for your pains. Julia loves you quite a little, too. You may have her for a wife. The sign above the door shall then be:

“‘Agrippa, wine merchant.’”

Jupiter knows what a mass of foolish twaddle the old fellow might have continued to give forth, if Agrippa had not cut him short.

“What, you become Pontifex, you overloaded wine-cask! Rome has missed this one calamity.

“Hear me, Romans, Marcus wants to be Pontifex. Sextus has already promised him the office. He desires that I work in his behalf. If I do, he promises me a bag full of gold, his Julia, already seduced by Sextus, and his tavern to boot. All in favor of Marcus for Pontifex Maximus, say aye!” A loud howl greeted the speech of Agrippa. For a long time the Romans had not laughed so heartily.

“Marcus, let us kiss you. Now there’s going to be fun in town. A Pontifex like you

we have never had, nor may we ever have another after you."

Marcus continued tugging away at Agrippa's Tunic. He swore he had never said the like. Agrippa was only jesting at his expense. But the people would not have it that way.

"Long live Marcus, the Roman Pontifex, elected by the Roman people and with the consent of the gods!" the crowd yelled and laughed, till Marcus, in utter despair, almost fell upon his knees.

After this tumultuous scene was over, Agrippa demanded the promised reward. "You may keep Julia," he continued, "as I do not want her, since Sextus is her friend."

The laughter was renewed.

"Give us wine, Marcus," some laborers shouted, "but no sour wine, or we shall declare the election void."

Poor Marcus was a picture of misery. At last he took sufficient courage to threaten the jokers with his friend, Sextus. That produced another outburst.

"What, you will threaten us with him! Don't you know that Tarquin is no longer

king? Father and son are exiled from the city. We, the Roman people, have driven them away. We are king. You must assist, or we shall drive you away as the others."

"By Pollux, this is verily a revolution, it is lese majesty. And I shall go home and lock my door," piped Marcus, now completely crushed.

Like a broken wine cask he waddled out of the Forum, pursued by the mocking of the multitude. . . .

All his hopes were gone. And to think of the expense to which he had gone for a bordered Toga, only increased his mental distress.

He was scarcely gone, when the cry was raised: "They are coming! Brutus comes from Collatia! Sic semper tyrannis!" reverberated from the field of Mars.

"Sic semper tyrannis!" thousands shouted from the Forum.

"Long live Brutus, the liberator!"

"Down with the Tarquinians!"

"Away with the kings!"

Then all was quiet.

* * * * *

XII.

A murmuring, ever increasing in volume, till it resembled the madly rushing ocean waves, as they tumble over one another, to break with renewed force against the rocky shore, ran through the surging crowd and greeted the Tribune with exclamations of surprise, as, with firm step, he ascended the rostrum.

This, surely, was not Junius Brutus as the people hitherto had known him. The noble figure seemed to grow before the very eyes of the wondering ones, as he gathered up the folds of his Toga. The mighty brow, the flaming eyes, the sharp cut features, let all of them forget at once the many faults and blemishes which they formerly had noted about his person.

This man was truly Rome's liberator from the yoke of tyranny, the avenger of womanly honor, as he faced them now. At his side stood Collatinus, the injured husband, whose kindness of heart had made him many friends.

In the background loomed up the powerful figure of Valerius, surnamed Poplicola. Lucretius' careworn face beside him reminded all of Sextus' knavery, while the war-like escort from Collatia lent a serious aspect to the whole.

Commanding silence, Brutus began as follows:

"Citizens of Rome!

"We have long and patiently borne together the burdens, not to mention the crimes, of royalty. To-day our measure of disgrace was filled to the brim.

"Last night Sextus, Tarquin's son and chosen successor, with drawn sword, violated the laws of hospitality, and sullied the friend's home with his lewdness, yea, destroyed it. Dishonored, disgraced for life, Lucretia had no choice but death. She expired in the midst of those whom she had beckoned to her side, that she might call the avenging gods down upon her defiler. Here is the dagger which she eagerly thrust into her pure heart. May it be the first morning greeting to liberty!

"Collatinus, whom you all know, has lost his faithful wife, Lucretius, hoary with age,

laments his childless home, we, the Roman people, weep silent tears, not at the death of a woman, nor yet the revolting painfulness of fate, nay, only at the cause of her death. The people shall judge the murderer. How long will you withhold your judgment? If the Roman's home is no longer safe from these royal defilers, how long, until the whole state, saturated with their venom, shall fall in ruins? I leave you to answer.

"I shall speak of the king's own despotism, of the misery and hardships of the people, who work in ditches and canals.

"The Roman was ever a freeman at home, while strangers feared him as a brave warrior. He chose his own kings and had the fathers of the senate confirm them. What has Tarquin done? For years you lament your bitter fate. We all know that he dug the grave of Roman liberty.

"Ask your fathers, who yet knew Servius, about his fate. Ask them who, dumb with horror and sorrowfully, stood before the senate house on that most disgraceful of the days of Rome, whose arrant hand it was that flung the weak old man from the steps. And yet Servius was the people's best friend.

"Fathers of Rome! Turn your eyes with me to the Cyprian road, which is called the wicked alley to this very day, and what do we see?

"Servius, slain by Tarquin's hired assassins, laying lifeless in his own blood. A fiendish woman madly tears along the road in her chariot—the driver turns his eyes in horror from the awful sight—and the woman, driven by the Furies, lashes her horses, and they race wildly over the already mangled form, until the father's blood disfigures the demonlike face and bespatters garments and carriage of the new queen. Who did this? Tell your children, if they do not know!

"Turn back with me to the day when a double funeral passed through the streets of Rome. They had been man and wife. Who murdered them?

"Who held their adulterous nuptials over the newly made grave? Young men, ask your fathers!

"Oh, Lucius Tarquinius, why were you not smothered in your mother's womb!

"And you, Tullia, venomous offspring of the infernals, lewd and wanton murderess,

when will the measure of your crimes be full? When will the avenging gods free Rome's people from you?

"Rome was severely punished by Jupiter, when he, to whom we pray in reverent awe, permitted this monster, Sextus, to be born. Perhaps we had transgressed his laws most shamefully, when we endangered the welfare of his state and of eternal justice by constant quarrels among ourselves.

"O ye eternal gods, who hover with protecting wings over the parents' life, avenge the crimes of this one family, that the Romans may take new life for noble deeds!

"Shall I also speak of the flower of Rome's manhood, of the friends of their country, who silently slumber along the Appian way? Who killed them, that he might wantonly take possession of their goods?

"Who slew my own brother, him than whom there was no more fearless defender of the people's rights?

"For his life, I demand revenge from Tarquin. Did you ever feel pity for him, whom you aptly called Brutus? Nay, you could not know that I only saved my life this way,

wishing to preserve it in order that I might some day destroy Tarquin's rule.

"Now that I have cast aside the mask, the avenging Junian stands before you, who to-day have seen and learned to know my true nature for the first time. It was in your interest alone that I deceived Tarquin these many years.

"Are you ready to re-establish in Rome the dominion of the people? You are, if manly blood flows in your veins.

"Or, do you prefer to remain slaves? You are naught but drudges and stone choppers now. You have fought his battles, won his wars, conquered the people of Italy. He commanded, and you obeyed. He took the spoils; you have the wounds. Tarquin has made the same state a tool of oppression which our fathers founded as a safeguard of the citizen.

"The constitution, like the echo, is but an empty sound. Have our fathers shed their blood and established their rights only to enable a godless tyrant, a lying whelp, to pervert their very conquests? Nay, I say, ever nay! We will fight as did our fathers. Even though our blood should redden the Tiber,

slaves we'll be no longer. Advance, ye men of Rome, do honor to the name of Roman! Let him who is a man follow me. Lucretia must be avenged!"

As though stricken dumb, the people had followed his oration. Not a sound could be heard. Now, however, that Brutus had finished, there rose a storm of applause, of enthusiasm, such as Rome had never witnessed. Brutus had become the people's god. This, verily, was Jupiter's miracle, as Numa had prophesied. Young men of all stations enthusiastically crowded about the rostrum, fathers incited their sons to freedom's battle, mothers, with tear-stained eyes, praised Brutus, the avenger of womanly honor. Even veterans, whose breasts were scarred with wounds of many a battle, demanded arms.

"Warriors, to the field of Mars! There you shall have arms which Tarquin bought with the people's tribute. They are yours," Brutus shouted.

Thousands followed the Collatians.

"The Roman people declare Lucius Tarquinius dethroned and exiled, together with his family. I suggest that we elect two Consuls for one year," Brutus shouted again.

"Aye, aye, let it be as Brutus says. He and Collatinus shall be the first Consuls of the republic!" the crowd shouted in a unit.

Brutus continued: "Citizens, go to the public meeting; senators, to the senate house. Reaffirm your ancient bill of rights, free all debtors from their shackles, and pass such laws as become a free state. For this alone have I risked my life. Only in this manner can our work endure and Rome enjoy the blessings of liberty. I shall go to the army."

"You are right, Brutus. That's what we will do. Long live Brutus, the liberator! Down with the rule of kings!"

One will seemed to possess them all, as they had but one aim in view—a people's government.

Wildly shrieked the Tuba from the field of Mars, where Brutus arranged the ranks of the militia, manned the gates, and incited to battle. For the first time since its foundation, the citizens had full control of Rome. All differences of ranks had disappeared. . . .

Tullia had heard the disastrous news at the palace. She was dumbfounded and in wild despair when the slave, whom she had dispatched to the scene of the uproar, returned.

"I suppose it is another uprising of the Plebeians, Pancratius, which will be quickly subdued." She looked at him sharply, as if to read the answer in his eyes.

"It is a revolution, madame. Tarquin is dethroned, and all of you are exiled. The people have declared Rome a republic to be ruled by themselves," he answered, crestfallen.

"And where is Brutus? Why does he not disperse the crowd?"

"Brutus is their leader. They all follow him. They say that Sextus has assaulted Lucretia, and that she has killed herself. The people are beyond themselves. They will soon be at the castle gates."

"Quick, Pancratius, have my horses in readiness. I shall go to the king. These Romans must be punished!"

She ran to the window like a wild beast at bay. Such infamous treachery! Was she to be murdered? And all this because poor Sextus had forgotten himself! Outrageous! . . . The envoys had witnessed the proceedings in the Forum from the garden of the Junian villa, and were just promenading in the colonnade in front of the house, when a horrible sight attracted their attention. A woman

was driving down the hillside in a chariot, having in her wake the dregs of the Suburra. She lashed her horses furiously, to escape her persecutors, who ran after her with sticks and stones. Many a rock had already wounded her seriously. Her face was bloody and her hair hung dishevelled over her shoulders. Her eyes rested hyena-like on the rabble, men and women with besotted features.

"Away with Tullia, the patricide, the slayer of husband and sister! Away with the kings!" the vicious ones shrieked.

"Stop men! Go to your homes, women! No one shall suffer harm. No blood shall be shed. This is the order of the senate and the people."

The woman, so suddenly freed, looked triumphantly at her persecutors. Now she would have revenge.

"Centurio, have these people put in irons. They insulted their queen," she called to the officer.

"Madame, it is my duty to hand you the decree of the people. The Romans no longer recognize a queen. You are exiled. My soldiers will take you to the nearest gate. Men, do your duty!"

The soldiers took Tullia by a circuitous route to the nearest gate, as though she were a common prisoner.

Strabo turned around with a cynical smile. "You see, my boy, the rabble is the same the world over. Now these people really believe to have liberated themselves. They will never learn that the worst tyrant slumbers within their own bosom—the tyrant of ignorance, with all its horrid companions.

"Their historians, however, will record it as true that the knavery of a king's son so incited the Roman people that they concluded to govern themselves. And the stupid people will believe it to the end of time! Disgusting!"

"True, Strabo, but we may soon have to measure Roman strength in battle, despite the treaty won by fraud," Himilco retorted.

From the Forum the wild shouts of the people again struck upon their ears:

"Sic semper tyrannis!"

"Long live the republic!"

* * *

Strabo only rubbed his hands contentedly and smiled.

* * *

APPENDIX.

* * * Beyond these deserts, and almost opposite to the Island of Sicily, lay the famous republic of Carthage, which was now possessed of a considerable territory, surrounded by the petty African monarchies, out of which the great kingdom of Numidia was afterwards formed.

The city of Carthage is said to have been founded about a hundred years earlier than Rome, and was now unquestionably farther advanced in the commercial and lucrative arts and superior in every resource to Rome, besides that which is derived from the national character, and which is the consequence of public virtue.

In respect to mere form, the constitution of both nations was nearly alike. They had a senate and popular assemblies, and annually elected two officers of state for the supreme direction of their civil and military affairs; and even at Carthage the departments of state were so fortunately balanced, as to have stood for ages the shock of corrupt factions, without having suffered any fatal revolution, or without falling into either extreme of anarchy or tyrannical usurpation.

* * *

Their situation, so convenient for shipping, was extremely favorable to this pursuit; and their success in it soon put them in possession of a territory by which they became a landed as well as a naval power. They visited Spain, under pretense of giving support

and assistance to the City of Gades, which, like themselves, was a colony from Tyre. They became masters of Sardinia, and had considerable possessions in Sicily, of which they were extremely desirous to seize the whole. From every part of their acquisitions they endeavored to derive the profit of merchants, as well as the revenue of sovereigns.

In this republic, individuals had amassed great fortunes, and estimated rank by their wealth. A certain estate was requisite to qualify any citizen for the higher offices of state; and, in the canvass for elections, every preferment, whether civil or military, was venal. Ambition itself, therefore, became a principle of avarice, and every Carthaginian, in order to be great, was intent to be rich. Though the interests of commerce should have inculcated the desire of peace, yet the influence of a few leading men in the state, and even the spirit of rapacity which pervaded the people, the necessity to which they were often reduced of providing settlements abroad for a populace who could not be easily governed at home, led them frequently into foreign wars, and even engaged them in projects of conquest. But, notwithstanding this circumstance, the community stifled or neglected the military character of their own citizens, and had perpetual recourse to foreigners, whom they trusted with their arms, and made the guardians of their wealth. * * *

Under this wretched policy, however, the first offices of trust and command being reserved for the natives, though the character of the people in general was mean and illiberal, yet a few, being descended of those who had enjoyed the higher honors of the state, inherited the characters of statesmen and warriors; and, instead of suffering by the contagion of mercenary

characters, they derived some additional elevation of mind from the contrast of manners they were taught to despise. And thus, though the state in general was degenerate, a few of its members were qualified for great affairs. War, and the other objects of state, naturally devolved on such men, and occasionally rendered them necessary to a sedentary or corrupted people, who, in ordinary times, were disposed to slight their abilities, or to distrust their power. They became, unfortunately, a party for war in the councils of their country, as those who were jealous of them became, with still less advantage to the public, a party for peace; or, when at war, a party who endeavored to embarrass the conduct of it; and, under the effects of misfortune, were ever ready to purchase tranquillity by the most shameful and dangerous concessions.

Carthage, being mistress of the sea, was already long known on the coasts of Italy; she had treaties subsisting with the Romans above two hundred years, in which they mutually settled the limits of their navigation, and the regulation of their trade. And the Romans, as parties in these treaties, appear to have had intercourse with foreign nations by sea, earlier than is stated in the other parts of their history. * * *

—Adam Ferguson, LL. D., *History of the Roman Republic*.

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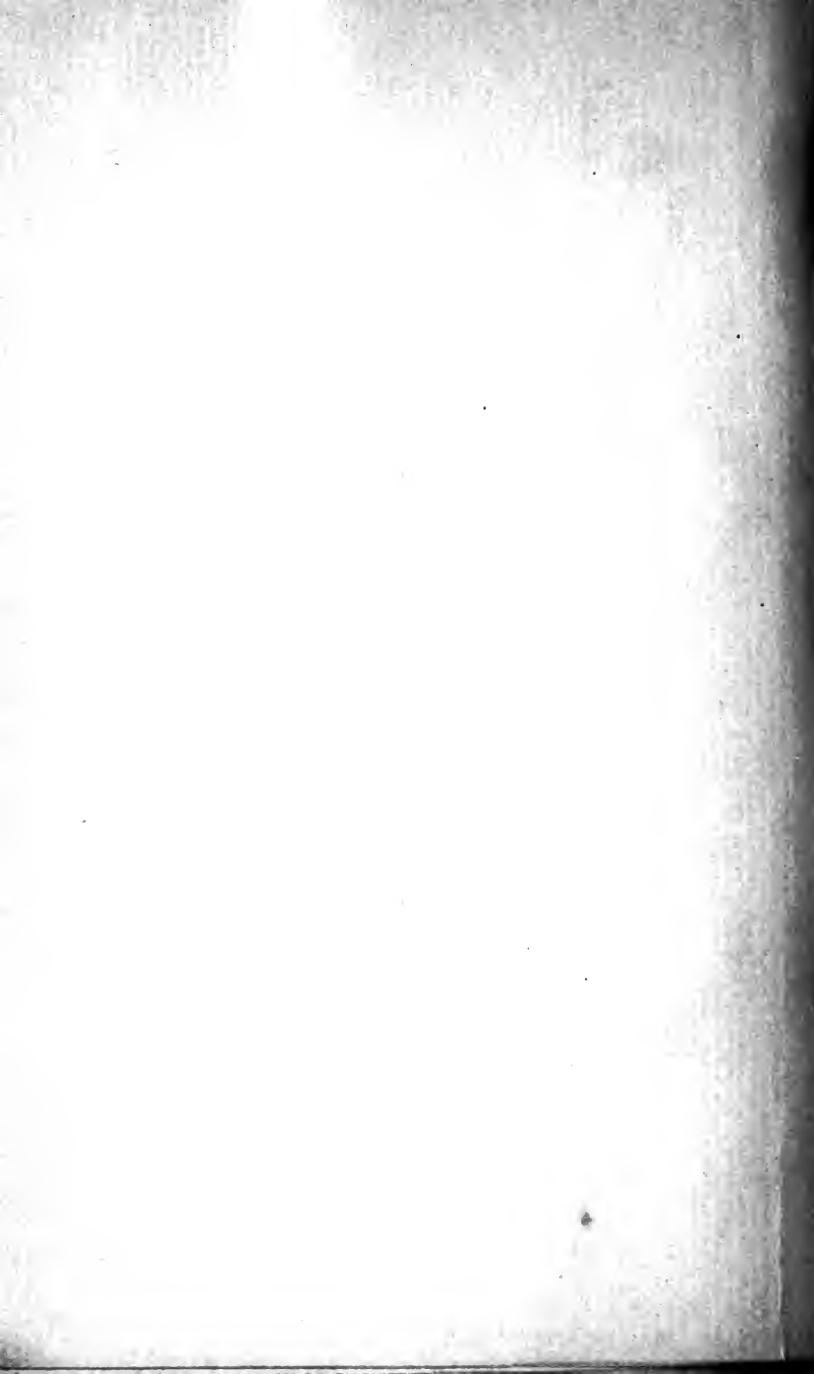
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